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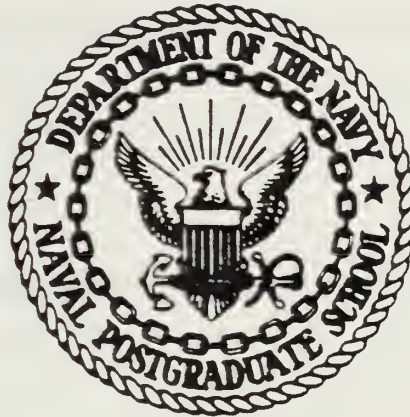






# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

## Monterey, California



# THESIS

SPAIN: DEMOCRACY AND THE MILITARY

by

Charles Douglas Voros  
December 1981

Thesis Advisor:

D. P. Burke

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The present government has pursued a mixed program of reform and appeasement to defuse the danger of a military takeover in Spain. Elements within the Spanish military, however, remain a potential threat to Spanish democracy.



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SPAIN: DEMOCRACY AND THE MILITARY

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirement for the degree of

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from the

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December 1981



## ABSTRACT

Since the death of Generalissimo Francisco Franco in November 1975, Spain has undergone a remarkable political transformation in which King Juan Carlos I, Franco's hand-picked successor, inherited the authoritarian powers of a dictator and promptly used them to turn his country into a constitutional monarchy rooted in liberal democratic principles.

The initial phase of Spain's democratic evolution was characterized by euphoria and good will in which a series of firm and decisive steps were taken to replace the old regime with new democratic institutions and norms. Since 1979, however, the pace of Spain's democratic progress has slowed, as the problems of regional autonomy, terrorism, and a disaffected military have threatened to disrupt Spain's democratic evolution. Prime Minister Suarez' abrupt resignation in January 1981 and the military coup attempt a month later brought into sharp focus the fragile state of Spain's democracy.

The present government has pursued a mixed program of reform and appeasement to defuse the danger of a military takeover in Spain. Elements within the Spanish military, however, remain a potential threat to Spanish democracy.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION: SPAIN'S DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION -----	7
	A. THE FRANCO LEGACY -----	8
	B. KING JUAN CARLOS I AND DEMOCRATIC CHANGE -----	14
	C. PROBLEMS FACING DEMOCRATIC SPAIN TODAY -----	19
II.	AMERICAN NATIONAL INTEREST IN SPAIN -----	25
	A. DEFINING THE NATIONAL INTEREST -----	25
	B. AMERICA AND FRANCO -----	30
	C. DEMOCRATIC SPAIN AND THE AMERICAN INTEREST -----	38
	1. Defense and Security Interests -----	41
	2. Political and World Order Interests -----	44
	3. Ideological Interests -----	45
	4. Economic Interests -----	46
III.	THE SPANISH ARMED FORCES -----	51
	A. SPAIN'S DEFENSE ORGANIZATION -----	51
	B. THE MILITARY UNDER FRANCO -----	54
	C. THE MILITARY AND DEMOCRATIC SPAIN -----	58
IV.	AUTONOMY, TERRORISM AND THE MILITARY -----	65
	A. REGIONAL AUTONOMY IN SPAIN -----	66
	1. Origins of Basque and Catalan Nationalism --	67
	2. Franco and National Unity -----	72
	3. Spanish Democracy and Devolution -----	75
	B. THE THREAT FROM THE LEFT - THE ETA -----	85
	C. THE REACTION OF THE RIGHT - THE MILITARY -----	91



V.	THE MILITARY AND DEMOCRACY -----	96
A.	THE FEBRUARY COUP AND ITS AFTERMATH -----	98
B.	DEFUSING THE MILITARY THREAT - HARDLINE OR APPEASEMENT? -----	102
VI.	CONCLUSION: THE VIABILITY OF SPANISH DEMOCRACY -----	111
	LIST OF REFERENCES -----	118
	INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST -----	127



## I. INTRODUCTION: SPAIN'S DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION

On December 27, 1978, three years after the death of Generalissimo Francisco Franco, King Juan Carlos I of Spain signed into law his country's new constitution, a document drawn up over the preceeding eighteen months by Spain's first freely elected assembly in more than forty years. This act was the culmination of a remarkable process in which, as one observer remarked, "a King inherited the authoritarian powers of a dictator and promptly used them to turn his country into a democracy." [1]

The promulgation of a new constitution was an initial, albeit fundamental, step in Spain's democratic transition. This transition is on-going as the Spanish people continue to struggle with the problems associated with their country's turn toward liberal democracy. It is the intent of this thesis to examine the viability of Spanish democracy and assess the impact of the Spanish military on its prospects for continued success. As an introduction, this chapter will briefly summarize Spain's political development since the death of Franco and identify those problems which continue to threaten Spain's democratic evolution. To fully appreciate Spain's remarkable political transformation, however, an understanding of the Franco regime's impact on Spanish society is required.



## A. THE FRANCO LEGACY

The roots of the Franco regime lie within the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), that bloody conflict which pitted Spaniard against Spaniard and polarized all of Europe. To Franco, the Civil War was a crusade to free Spain from her contamination by everything that was non-Spanish. As E. Ramon Arango wrote, "he (Franco) resembled nothing so much as a man from the Reconquest, ridding Spain not of the Moor and of the Jew, but of the Republic, the liberal, the capitalist, the communist, the freemason, and the athiest." [2]

In order to impart an aura of legitimacy to his regime following his Civil War victory, Franco condemned and denigrated the Second Republic (1931-36) for its failures and excesses. The Second Republic was presented by Francoist propaganda as the culmination of a period of national decline and disintegration that began in the 19th century. It was portrayed as the epitome of the social, economic and political vices associated with liberal democracies and as a regime which encouraged the importation of foreign ideologies such as liberalism, socialism, and anarchism, that were at conflict with "traditional" Spanish values. The Civil War, on the other hand, was glorified as the crusade that purged Spain of these infectuous elements, resisted the Communist threat to Spain and Western Europe, and saved the country and Christianity. [3]



The Franco regime started by rejecting the principles of liberal democracy and adhering to the fascist doctrine of the Falange. A totalitarian dictatorship replaced the Second Republic, political parties were banned and a single-party system was instituted. The Catholic Church regained the temporal powers it had lost under the Republic and the Armed Forces regained their militaristic role in preserving the national unity of Spain.

Following World War II, however, the Spanish regime found that it had to co-exist with countries governed according to democratic principles. Accordingly, the regime began to change, and slowly, but steadily, evolved in a more moderate direction divesting itself of certain totalitarian and repressive trappings that it featured in earlier years. In the process it emerged as an authoritarian state distinct at once from both totalitarian and democratic political systems. Franco's authoritarian regime incorporated a political system which allowed an element of limited political pluralism (reflected in institutions such as the Catholic Church, the syndicates, and the military); which lacked a guiding ideology but instead nurtured an ill-defined "mentality" that was more emotional than objective; and which was characterized by the lack of extensive and intensive political mobilization of the population. Its only political organization the National Movement, did not monopolize access to power, but instead served as a tool for those in control. [4]



During the 1950's and the 1960's, Franco attempted to fashion a democratic mask for a Spain to cover the more authoritarian aspects of his regime. Franco knew full well, however, that any political evolution in Spain would be narrowly constrained by the falangist mentality he had embraced. To justify his regime's reactionary character and to further cement its legitimacy, Franco emphasized the so-called "originality of Spanish democracy." As Jose Amodia explained,

Spain was not the same as other nations and therefore had a 'democratic system' which suited her idiosyncracies. Spanish democracy is not a form of liberal democracy, but that does not make it any less democratic. The Spanish character is bedeviled by certain failings - 'demonios familiares' as Franco would call them - such as individualism, lack of solidarity, and extremism that makes it incompatible with liberal democracy as understood in Western Europe. [5]

The democracy that Franco would give to Spain would be, in his eyes at least, tailor-made to the temperament of the people.

Spain, therefore, underwent what the Franco regime liked to interpret as an evolutionary change, a change from an overt dictatorship to what has been called by several political analysts a "facade democracy." [6] The regime recognized the need for change, or at least the perception of change, not only to maintain some resemblance of popularity at home, but also to improve its degree of acceptance abroad. Change and progress throughout the Franco era, however, was uneven among the various sectors of Spanish society. Whereas during the Second Republic the political structure was far ahead of the socio-economic infrastructure, under Franco, Spain's



socio-economic evolution outpaced its political evolution.

Spain's post-war isolation did little to improve the Spanish economy already devastated by the Civil War. Even during the 1950's when United States - Spanish relations improved, American aid to Spain had little economic impact, and by 1957 the Spanish economy was near bankruptcy. The introduction of politically aseptic experts into the Franco cabinet in 1957, however, along with a currency devaluation, the implementation of an economic stabilization plan and membership in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), launched Spain on an economic recovery. [7]

Following an IBRD recommendation in 1962 that the time was right for development, the "Comisaría del Plan de Desarrollo," a new government department charged with planning and coordinating Spain's economic growth, promulgated three four-year plans, (1964-67, 1968-71, 1972-75), which were to serve as the economic guidelines for the remainder of the Franco era. For the most part, these programs were successful, and Spain was transformed from an underdeveloped agrarian country into a growing, industrial society. Major economic indicators such as national and personal income, foreign trade, treasury reserves, food consumption, production, and housing showed healthy increases throughout the 1960's as a measure of prosperity came to the Spanish people. [8]



Accompanying Spain's growing economic prosperity during this period was a mass movement of population. Peasants from the countryside migrated to the growing industrial urban centers. Spanish workers emigrated to more affluent Western European countries, relieving Spain of unemployment problems. and foreign tourists flocked to Spain on a massive scale. These movements were encouraged by the Franco government to aid Spain's economic growth (which they did) but they also had other far reaching consequences.

The growing contact of Spaniards with other Europeans who enjoyed greater freedoms, the intermingling of Spanish workers with their foreign counterparts who had their own independent trade unions to look after their interests, and the coming of age of a new generation of Spaniards who were less attached to the regime and more receptive to ideas from abroad, created an ever increasing sector of the populace who began to question the idiosyncracies of Spain's political and social system. Jose Amodia observes that "they expected a rational and convincing answers and appeals to traditional values and demagogic slogans along the lines of 'we are different' or 'we are better' would no longer satisfy." [9]

What one saw developing in Spain at this time was a re-emergence of the political consciousness of the people. To understand the significance of this phenomenon, one must realize that throughout the Franco era, the political development of the Spanish people had been ignored or consciously



inhibited. Political changes that were made had neither the aim nor the effect of giving Spaniards a greater share and freer hand in running their own country, an essential condition for real political development. So-called progressive moves such as the Press Law of 1966, were designed to improve the regime's democratic facade without endangering its monopoly of power.

The Franco regime as alluded to previously has been characterized by many analysts, J. Linz in particular, as being authoritarian, that is, seeking to maintain or restore traditional patterns of authority through the demobilization of the populace, or, in other words, depoliticizing the Spanish people. [10] The Franco regime did not attempt to mobilize the masses, but instead seemed to be quite content with passive support, preferring its citizens to be politically apathetic. To this end it has managed "to inculcate or at least reinforce a disdain for political parties and politicians as well as a low interest in civic and political affairs." [11]

At the time of Franco's death, however, Spain had outgrown the dictator's thirty-six year old authoritarian state. It had become an urban industrial nation whose people were conscious of the political and social freedoms enjoyed by other Europeans but denied to them. Spain had become prosperous, optimistic and restless for political change. The political system of Franco, with its repression of dissent, its fascist



labor syndicates, its phoney elections and one sided referenda, its feeble Cortes and its adulation of a remote, cold leader, no longer felt comfortable. [12] Spain was ready for change a change that the Franco regime, shackled by an outdated political philosophy, could not provide.

#### B. KING JUAN CARLOS I AND DEMOCRATIC CHANGE

When change did come to Spain following Franco's death, it was not revolutionary change; instead it was a change accomplished from within the system by Franco's heirs rather than his opponents. What occurred was a peaceful transition from a personalist, authoritarian dictatorship to a constitutional monarchy rooted in liberal democratic principles.

Two men were largely responsible for the political transformation of Spain into a modern democratic state, King Juan Carlos I, Franco's hand-picked successor, and Aldolfo Suárez, the former Secretary General of Franco's ruling National Movement. Both men, though not zealous reformers when Franco was alive, were nonetheless committed to the establishment of democratic institutions in Spain after his death.

The process of transition to democracy in Spain can be divided into three great phases or periods. The first phase encompassed that period from the death of Franco to the first parliamentary elections in June 1977. During this period, King Juan Carlos and Suárez, his appointed Premier, led the reform of political institutions within the general framework



of laws and institutions left them by Franco. Their reforms were nonetheless impressive. All in all, through decree, referendum, and legislation, they legalized political parties including the Communist party, abolished Franco's National Movement, legalized independent trade unions, abolished the largely appointed Francoist legislature and replaced it with a freely elected, bicameral Cortes, convoked partisan elections and allowed freedom of speech and assembly in electoral campaigns. [13]

The Spanish political scene following Franco's death was dominated by a struggle between three fundamental groups, those who sought to impose a "ruptura" (or break) with the Francoist past, those who advocated "reforma", insisting that the change come from within the system, and those who wanted "continuismo" with the past. [14] As one can deduce, Suárez and his "Union del Centro Democratico" (Union of Democratic Center or UCD) party took the "reforma" side of the question. Advocates of "ruptura" were represented by the Spanish Left, primarily the "Partido Socialista Obrero Español" (Socialist Workers Party or PSOE) headed by Felipe Gonzalez and the "Partido Comunista de España" (Communist Party of Spain or PCE) led by Santiago Carrillo. Those desiring "continuismo" identified with the "Alianza Popular" (Popular Alliance or AP) headed by former Interior Minister Manuel Fraga Iribarne.

It is evident that advocates of reform, King Juan Carlos and Suárez, won out during this first phase of Spain's



democratic transition. The political expression of the reformist victory was Suarez's triumph in the June 1977 elections for the new Cortes which was empowered to write Spain's new constitution. Suárez's center-right UCD party garnered thirty-four percent of the vote and 165 seats in the Congress of Deputies. The socialist PSOE was second, twenty-nine percent of the vote/118 seats, followed by the PCE, 9.2 percent of the vote/twenty seats, and the right wing AP, 8.4 percent/sixteen seats. [15]

As the election results indicated, the Spanish people wanted nothing to do with "continuismo" and the old regime. What emerged was a right-of-center minority government headed by Suárez with its principal opposition coming from the socialist left. It was evident, however, that the "ruptura" parties were in no position to impose a new system overnight. This was partly due to internal disagreements over strategy, partly to a lack of legitimacy with the populace and partly to a lack of access to the levers of power. Furthermore, their very participation in the elections was a concession to reform and put them on the defensive against Suárez's political momentum.

The period from June 1977 to the approval of the new constitution by referendum in December 1978 and the subsequent parliamentary elections in March 1979 marked a second phase in Spain's democratic transition. This period, in which Suárez engineered a consensus broad enough to draft a new



constitution, was marked by euphoria and good will in which Spanish leaders of nearly all political persuasions took a series of firm and decisive steps in order to replace the old regime with robust new democratic institutions and norms. In October 1977, for example, Suárez's ruling UCD along with the AP, PCE, and PSOE agreed to a political truce and a common economic policy, (the Moncloa Pact), while the new constitution was being drawn up. Furthermore, all four parties played an active role in the referendum campaign advocating a favorable and massive vote by the Spanish electorate on the new constitution. [17] The positive (eighty-eight percent) vote in favor of the constitution contrasted sharply with the deep cleavage in Spanish society created by Spain's last constitution which founded the Second Republic.

As mentioned previously, the King signed the Constitution into law on December 27, 1978. Two days later Suárez called for new parliamentary elections to be held on March 1 1979. This move caught the leftist opposition by surprise since they expected Suárez to hang on to power after the Constitution had been promulgated for the full four-year term to which he was entitled. As a result, the opposition parties had little time to organize or raise money for the campaign. As shown in Table 1, the outcome of the March elections was almost a carbon copy of the results of 1977. [18]

Since Suárez's re-election in 1979, which marks the beginning of the third stage of Spain's transition, the pace



Table 1: Spanish Election Results  
Congress of Deputies [19]

Major parties	Number of seats	
	June 1977	March 1979
UCD	165	168
PSOE	118	121
PCE	20	23
AP	16	9

of democratic progress has slowed. Having solved many of the structural problems of democracy, Spain's politicians seemed unable to agree on the broad direction the new system should take. According to Meir Serfaty, "the very vigor and single-mindedness with which the fundamental change was carried out precluded any concerted effort to tackle other problems that needed attention," such as the economy, terrorism, and the question of autonomy and regional devolution.

[20]

It also became evident that the euphoria over democracy was subsiding. The voter absentee rate began to rise, and with the Cortes now having to flesh out the skeleton provided by the constitution, conflicts came to the fore. With these conflicts, the traditional political cleavages of Spain, between right and left and between the geographic center and periphery emerged despite efforts toward accommodation and consensual politics. At the same time, the disdain for



political parties and politicians, nurtured during the Franco era, resurfaced and began to work against the consolidation of democracy once the initial excitement had passed.' [21]

### C. PROBLEMS FACING DEMOCRATIC SPAIN TODAY

By the end of 1980, a stagnating economy, terrorism, and a restless military had placed Prime Minister Suárez in a politically uncomfortable position. His leadership was under fire not only from the opposition parties of the left and right, but also from within his own party which was beginning to lose its cohesiveness in the face of Spain's mounting political problems. Perhaps feeling that he no longer enjoyed the confidence of the King or his party, Suárez resigned as Spain's Prime Minister in January 1981.

His abrupt resignation left a political vacuum which his nominated successor, Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, had difficulty filling. Calvo Sotelo's failure to gain parliamentary endorsement of his government on the first attempt and the attempted military coup which followed shortly thereafter brought into sharp focus the fragile state of Spain's young democracy. Underlying this fragility and threatening the continued viability of Spanish democracy are several fundamental problems that the government has failed to satisfactorily address.

Central to the concerns of nearly all Spaniards is the state of the Spanish economy. The prosperous growth years of the 1960's and early 1970's have given way to economic



stagnation. Since Suárez's re-election in March 1979, the Spanish economy has suffered many setbacks. The estimated growth rate in 1980 was 0.8 percent, below the 1979 figure of 1.4 percent. The country's external debt showed a dismal five billion dollar deficit in 1980 with Spain forced to spend over twelve billion dollars a year for oil, the biggest foreign expenditure. [22]

By far the most serious economic problem is unemployment. With the rest of Western Europe suffering an economic recession, Spanish workers have been forced to return home, and along with Spain's own recession, have added to the ranks of the unemployed. Currently, Spain has the lowest employment levels of any country in the Organizational for Economic Development (OECD) with over twelve percent of its work force unable to find jobs. (Table 2)

Table 2: Unemployment in Spain  
(percent of work force) [23]

1975	4.0	1978	7.5	1981	
				(1st quarter)	13.6
1976	5.0	1979	9.2		
1977	5.7	1980	11.8		

Although most Spaniards recognize that their economic plight is not unique in the Western world, and they are prepared to endure hard times, the state of economy may exacerbate other tensions that are threatening political stability in Spain. [24] Worsening economic conditions will only add



to social and political unrest and make the Government's task much more difficult in dealing with terrorism, regional autonomy, a restless military and other problems that threaten to undermine the nation's accomplishments of the past five years.

Clearly, a principal threat to Spanish democracy is terrorism. Basque nationalists of the military wing of the "Euzkadi ta Askatasuna" (Basque Homeland and Liberty) or ETA and other extremist groups of both the Right and the Left share the common goal of bringing down Spain's democracy. All appear eager to provoke the Spanish Armed Forces into overthrowing the democratic regime, sparking the kind of tit-for-tat killing that led to the Civil War. According to the Economist, all want another dictatorship, the Right for its own sake and the Left because its supporters think it "will provoke a popular uprising that will plunge Spain into a Marxist, Leninist, Trotskyite Maoist paradise." [25]

The most persistent and effective terrorist group plaguing Spain are the ETA militants. By conducting a campaign of terror and bloodshed they hope to provoke a right-wing backlash in Spain that will bring down democracy and, with a twisted sense of logic, justify their resistance to what they perceive to be an inherently fascist Spain. A strong reaction by Spain's military and internal security forces against what they perceive to be a growing lack of law and order in Spain, would build, according to ETA theorists, popular resentment for far-off Madrid and increase the separatist yearnings of



the historically disaffected Basques. By goading the military into a right-wing coup, the ETA's claim that peaceful reform is impossible under Spanish democracy would be buttressed. The fact that one of the principal demands of the rebellious members of the Spanish Guardia Civil, who attempted the February 27, 1981 coup, was more freedom to combat Basque terrorism lends considerable weight to the ETA's tactics.

The issue of Basque terrorism is complex and must be understood within the larger issue of regional autonomy in Spain. It is essential, for example, to understand that for centuries the centrifugal force of Spain's cultural diversity has worked against Madrid's attempt to mold a national unity. Franco's answer to this problem was to suppress all tendencies toward diversity and political autonomy. Infused with fascist ideas about the glorification of the national state and intent on punishing the two regions that opposed him most steadfastly during the Civil War, Franco was determined to stamp out Basque and Catalan nationalism and culture. [26] Under Franco the military and Spain's internal security forces had a primary mission of preserving the national unity. The Guardia Civil, it has been remarked, behaved more like an army of occupation than a police force and was considered to be the ETA's best recruiting agency. [27]

After Franco's death and spurred by the early developments toward democracy at the national level, regional groups began to demand a measure of autonomy from a traditional, centralist



state. The new Constitution provided mechanisms for the granting of regional autonomy, and in 1979 autonomy was granted to both the Basque and Catalan regions. Autonomy did not curtail the ETA's terrorism however, for the ETA extremists are demanding more than autonomy; instead they advocate complete separation of the Basque region from Spain and its union with the French Basque country as an independent, socialist state.

As mentioned previously, an integral part of the terrorist and autonomy crisis in Spain is the reaction of the Spanish military. Defusing the military threat to Spanish democracy is a major task facing Spain's civilian regime and a central theme of this thesis. Since Franco's death, the liberalization of Spain's political climate has proven disturbing to many members of the Armed Forces, especially those senior officers who were indoctrinated under Francoism. The legalization of political parties the Army had previously been trained to persecute, the perceived erosion of Spanish unity that accompanied the government's program for regional autonomy and the decline of law and order exemplified by the ETA provocation, have contributed much to military discontent and to the danger of a right-wing backlash against Spain's democratic institutions. The history of modern Spain has made it clear that internal political violence time and again has destroyed constitutional government and produced a dictatorship to maintain order. Whether the current regime of King Juan Carlos and Premier Calvo Sotelo can effectively deal with this threat



will be a key factor in determining the viability of Spain's democratic evolution.

The theme of this thesis is to examine the role of the Spanish military as a factor that may inhibit democratic progress in Spain. Following a discussion of the United States' interests in Spain (Chapter II), an analysis of the Spanish Armed Forces as an institution, both under the Franco regime and in today's democratic Spain is presented (Chapter III). The issues of autonomy and terrorism are then examined (Chapter IV) with emphasis focused on the effect these issues have on the military. This is followed by an analysis of the threat of a military coup in Spain and the Government's efforts to defuse this threat (Chapter V). In conclusion, an assessment of Spain's democratic viability is made (Chapter VI).



## II. AMERICAN NATIONAL INTEREST IN SPAIN

### A. DEFINING THE NATIONAL INTEREST

To place Spain's political transformation in its proper perspective with respect to American foreign policy, it is necessary to develop an understanding of the American national interest in Spain. As this chapter will demonstrate, Spain's democratic evolution favors the American interest, although distinct trade-offs among the various components of this interest accompanied Spain's transition from Franco to democracy. Prior to a detailed examination of the American interest in Spain, however, it is necessary to define what is meant by the term national interest and to develop an operational framework for the analysis of the American interest in a given country.

The concept of the national interest has for decades been a subject of review, study and debate among American political and social scientists. It is used by political analysts to describe, explain, and evaluate a nation's foreign policy while at the same time the term national interest is used by statesmen and other political actors to propose or renounce policies and to justify or criticize a nation's actions in the international arena. Although national interest is said to describe the aspirations and goals of a nation-state, it remains elusive and hard to pin down, for it is a vague



concept, rooted in a nation's values and difficult to define and measure empirically. Central to this problem is the difficulty of specifying whose interests the national interest should include and the lack of procedures for culminating the single interests, once identified, into a national whole.

[28] Nonetheless, the national interest, however poorly measured, according to J. Fankel, "is the filter through which all international considerations have to pass before affecting national actions." [29] Therefore, even though the national interest may prove to be difficult to measure and may appear at times to be vague and nebulous, it is the ultimate standard by which one can evaluate a nation's foreign policy.

As alluded to earlier, the national interest is a multi-dimensional concept that can be put to a variety of uses. To be more precise, the national interest can fall predominantly, though seldom exclusively, within one of the following categories. [30]

On an aspirational level, national interest refers to the vision of the good life, to some ideal set of goals which a nation would like to realize if it were possible. "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" is an example pertinent to the American interest. Aspirational interests are generally long term and rooted in a nation's history and culture. They may, however, prove to be contradictory and may exceed a nation's capability to achieve them.



On an operational level, national interests refer to the sum of interests and policies actually pursued. They are generally short-term and more in line with a nation's ability to achieve them. These interests are influenced by changes in the power of the state and by changes in the international environment and are subject to the demands of the world order. U.S. interests in NATO as an alliance to preserve Europe from Soviet hegemony is an example of this type of interest.

On an explanatory or polemical level, the notion of national interest is used to "explain, evaluate, rationalize or criticize international behavior." [31] It is within this context that the concept of national interest is perhaps subject to the most abuse. Knowing how self-serving statements of policy makers are apt to be, their use of the national interest is often less to describe or prescribe than to prove oneself right and one's opponents wrong.

Given its multidimensional utility, what are the objective components of the American national interest as it applies to the analysis and formulation of U.S. foreign policy? As Donald Nuechterlein describes it, the realist school, (Morgenthau, Kennan, et al), defined America's "objective" national interest as the responsibility of a select few experts "who understood the world of international politics and were best able to define the policies a nation should follow to enhance its national interest vis-a-vis other states." [32] America's Vietnam experience, however, was a dramatic example of a case



in which American public opinion forced a redefinition of the American national interest which had a profound effect on American foreign policy throughout the 1970's. The point to be made here is that the determination of the national interest is a product of America's political process and American political and cultural values. Conflicting private interests, public opinion, special interest groups, lobbyists, bureaucrats, and the so-called "totally dispassionate view of the facts" by policy makers, all play a role and should play a role in the formulation of the national interest.

Another contention associated with the realist school, to which the concept of national interest is closely tied, was the idea that the national interest was synonymous with the acquisition of national power, especially military power. But why should the term national interest be so narrowly defined? There are aspirations of a state other than the acquisition of power. Just as pursuit of world socialism is a national interest of the Soviet Union, pursuit of individual freedom and democracy should be a valid goal of the United States. Idealism, morality, and "realpolitik" are all constituents of the national interest and need to be weighed and balanced in the formulation of America's foreign policy.

As mentioned before, the national interest is the ultimate standard by which one can evaluate foreign policy. Recognizing the above limitations and considerations, it is convenient to identify four basic interests of the United States that



form the underpinnings of American foreign policy and which in turn provide a reasonable framework by which the American interest can be assessed.

Defense and security interests necessary for America's self-preservation and protection from external threat.

Political or world order interests which maintain an international political and economic system in which America may feel secure and in which its citizens and commerce may operate peacefully outside its borders.

Ideological interests which protect and further the set values Americans believe to be universally good.

Economic interests which support America's economic well-being and ultimately the collective welfare of its citizens. [38]

These interests are not mutually exclusive and policy makers must accept trade-offs among them. Furthermore, the order in which these interests are listed does not necessarily reflect any priority of one over another. Priorities, like perceptions of the national interest change, but as a caveat, it may be argued as Nuechterlein does, that "unless a nation-state can defend its territory and citizens either through a strong defense or in alliance with others or both, none of the other three interests are likely to matter much." [34]

Given this framework, one can review and analyze the American interest in Spain both under the Franco regime, and today, under its democratic banner. It should be remembered however, that the national interest is but a perception and perceptions, no matter if they are those of the President, the Cabinet, the Congress, or the general public, are



influenced by the domestic and international environments and are subject to change. A policy at the time of formulation may not be based on a concrete appraisal of the national interest but may instead be a composite of what various individuals or groups perceive the interest to be. History, therefore, is the ultimate judge of whether a policy did in fact support a nation's interest, for it is from the historical perspective that form and definition are given to the national interest and from which an accurate evaluation of a nation's foreign policy are made.

#### B. AMERICA AND FRANCO

United States foreign policy toward Spain following World War II represents one of the most striking reversals of relations between states in modern history. After Franco's Civil War victory in 1939, U.S. relations with Spain virtually ended. Yet by 1953, with the signing of the Madrid Pact, the lone surviving signer of the 1939 Anti-Comintern Pact had become aligned with the free-world camp without experiencing the total defeat, destruction and revolution that had purged Germany, Italy and Japan of their fascist and militarist regimes. [35]

This reversal was the product of Franco's willingness to align Spain with the United States which emerged from World War II as the world's strongest political and economic power and the growing perception in the United States that the



Soviet Union represented the greatest threat to the American national interest.

From the end of World War II to 1948, the prospect of closer ties with Spain had little support in the United States. Immediately following the war, Franco's Spain underwent almost complete ostracism for two years. Spain was excluded from the newly formed United Nations and the great powers recalled their chiefs of missions from Madrid. In addition, the United States, Britain and France joined in a Tripartite Declaration, (March 4, 1946), aimed at encouraging liberalization in Spain and purging it of its Nazi-fascist elements. The declaration stated that the Spanish people "could not look forward to full and cordial association with them as long as Franco remained in control of Spain." [37]

The antagonism toward Spain was the strongest in Western Europe. In liberated France, De Gaulle's interim government, which closed the Pyrennes border with Spain, had taken a strong anti-Franco line from the start. Britain's new labour government gave ostracism strong support and the anti-Franco line was followed by the smaller European nations as well. [38]

This period, as Benjamin Welles suggests, was "Franco's darkest moment." [39] Soviet aggressiveness, however, soon began to drive a wedge between the wartime allies. The Soviet demands on Iran in 1946, the threats to Greece and Turkey in 1947-48, the strengthening of the Soviet stronghold over Eastern Europe, the communist victory in China and the



Berlin blockade of 1949 brought about an emerging consensus in the United States that the Soviet Union was the most serious threat to the democratic institutions of the free world.

By the end of 1947, the United States was in the thick of the Cold War. Earlier in the year, the Truman Doctrine had been proclaimed, and by 1949, an anti-Soviet alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, had been formed. In essence, the premises of U.S. foreign policy had been altered as the content of the American national interest was redefined to deal with the Soviet threat. The Truman Doctrine symbolized the United States' role as a superpower and the policy of containment, as articulated by George Kennan in his famous "Mr. X" article began to dictate American foreign policy objectives. [40]

Given Spain's geographic position and Franco's consistent anti-communist line, interest in the normalization of relations with the Franco regime began to grow in the United States. As early as October 1947, George Kennan, then Chief of the Policy Planning Staff of the State Department, recommended in a top secret memorandum that "in the national interest, the time has come for a modification of our policy toward Spain with a view toward early normalization of United States - Spanish relations both political and economic." [41]

President Truman, however, remained opposed to the fascist nature of the Franco regime and effectively held in check the so called "Spanish lobby" that favored a new policy toward



Spain. Truman's opposition was strengthened, as Arthur Whitaker suggests, "by the example of Western European powers rejecting Franco's bid for association with them in a western alliance against the Soviet menace." [42]

The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, however, put a new face on the Spanish question in the United States. With the threat of general war, strategy took an upper hand over ideology; military considerations took priority over political considerations in shaping U.S. foreign policy toward Spain. In short, the ideological component of the American national interest took a back seat to the defensive necessity of halting Soviet aggression.

The demonstration of Stalin's aggressive ambitions in Korea set off a quest for overseas bases by the United States. The negotiations with Spain that began in July 1951 were a part of this quest. Spain was viewed by U.S. policy makers as a potential ally that could support American defense and security interests. Spain's geographical position could be utilized to control Western access to the Mediterranean as well as providing a fall back area in the event of a Soviet lunge into Western Europe. The Pyrenees posed a formidable barrier and were considered one of the strongest natural defense lines in Europe behind which a secure storage of bulk military cargos could be stockpiled for the defense of Europe. [43] Furthermore, the establishment of strategic air bases in Spain as a supplement to those being established in North



Africa would permit B-47 bomber missions to be conducted against the Soviet Union without the necessity for in-flight refueling. In sum, the acquisition of bases would add another link to the global security network that the United States was building to contain the Soviet Union.

The signing of the Madrid Pact between the United States and Spain in September 1953 marked the end of Spain's isolation and formed the nucleus of U.S. - Spanish relations throughout the Franco era. In essence, the Madrid Pact consisted of three separate but interdependent executive agreements on defense, economic aid and mutual defense assistance which did not require approval by the U.S. Senate. [44]

In short, what the United States received was the right to develop, use, and maintain military bases in Spain in return for economic and military assistance. The 1963 Agreement to extend the Pact and the 1970 "Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation" which succeeded it, did not alter significantly the extent of U.S. base privileges in Spain but did increase the financial costs for those privileges. From 1953 to 1975 the cost to the United States of the Spanish bases totaled seven billion dollars. This figure included \$1,762.8 million in economic aid, \$2,230.1 million in military aid, and \$3 billion to build and operate the bases. [45]

Given the costs, how well were American interests served by U.S. foreign policy toward Spain during the Franco regime? Some, such as Ron Hadian, argue that the U.S. overextended



itself in Spain on the premise that Spanish bases were necessary to enhance the credibility of the American nuclear deterrent prior to the advent of the intercontinental ballistic missile and to meet Western Europe's defense needs. As a result, "Franco was successful in his pursuit of substantial economic and military aid from the United States, aid which was crucial to the maintenance of his regime." [46] Furthermore, Franco's relationship with the United States gained for him the prestige and acceptability for his regime that was denied him by the democracies of Western Europe. An additional cost of the Pact, therefore, was the impact it had on the U.S. image. By providing economic and military assistance to the authoritarian Franco regime, "American policy makers lent credibility to charges of a right-wing bias in American foreign policy." [47]

The initial premise of U.S. foreign policy toward Franco Spain was the promotion of American defense and security interests by containing the Soviet threat. In this respect, U.S. bases in Spain served to increase the credibility of America's nuclear deterrent. The deployment of B-47 squadrons to Spain was a significant part of the Strategic Air Command's nuclear strike force throughout the 1950's and 1960's. With the development of the long range bomber and the intercontinental ballistic missile however, the utility of these bases diminished and the forward deployment of the B-47 was terminated. Indeed the B-47s were themselves phased out.



American strategic deterrence was still served, to a lesser extent, by the naval base in Rota which serviced American ballistic submarines until 1979. In addition, this base contributed to the American naval presence in the Mediterranean and with the deployment of maritime patrol squadrons there, enhanced American anti-submarine warfare coverage of the western Mediterranean and the approaches to the Straits of Gibraltar.

With regard to American political and world order interests, U.S. foreign policy objectives in Spain were geared to the integration of Spain into the Western alliance system. Given Spain's strong proclivity for neutrality, an increased acceptance by the Spanish people of the importance of collective security and international cooperation would further this objective. The thrust of U.S. policy in this regard was to get Spain admitted to NATO. Military aid to Spain was an attempt to modernize Spanish Armed Forces and bring them up to a NATO level of competence. As a consequence of Europe's refusal to admit Spain to the alliance as long as Franco was in power, however, the United States never pushed this issue very hard before the NATO's North Atlantic Council. With more pressing problems demanding resolution and alliance cohesion, the Spanish issue was of secondary importance.

The impact on American economic interests during this period was minimal. Franco opened Spanish markets to foreign investment, but the costs of U.S. base privileges in terms of



economic aid and the balance of payments outflow required to support the stationing of American military personnel and their dependents in Spain outweighed any gains achieved in the private sector. [48] It can be argued, however, that U.S. economic aid which helped stabilize and bolster the Spanish economy, provided the impetus for modernizing Spanish industry, facilitating Spain's potential participation in the European Common Market and thus furthering the integration of Spain into the western order. [49] Once again, though, as long as Franco remained in power and his authoritarian regime continued, liberal West European governments remained opposed to any such overtures on behalf of Spain.

U.S. foreign policy support of American ideological interests, namely the promotion of individual freedoms and democratic government, during this period was minimal. The majority of the criticism of American relations with Spain centered upon American support for an authoritarian and undemocratic regime. Critics pointed out that U.S. support for Franco deterred effective democratic political opposition within Spain and that American foreign policy was shaped by defense interests as defined by the Pentagon. [50] It can also be said however, that given the threat communism appeared to present to the American conception of the world political order, support of Franco's anti-communist orientation was in the American interest. In other words, support of a totalitarianism of the right was respectable as a bulwark against a more menacing totalitarianism of the left.



In summation, U.S. foreign policy toward Spain during the Franco era involved several trade-offs with respect to the American national interest. American defense and security interests were supported, although the degree of support varied with changes in weapons technology and the nature of the threat, at the expense of American ideological and economic interests. Promotion of political and world order interests met with some success by nurturing Franco's pro-western and anti-communist orientation, however, the conflict this policy created with Western and American ideological interests limited the extent of its success.

#### C. DEMOCRATIC SPAIN AND THE AMERICAN INTEREST

With the death of Franco in 1975, a new era in Spain's political evolution began. Spain's move toward democracy, coupled with a change in America's perception of its role in the international system caused a re-evaluation of the American national interest and American policy toward Spain.

Today's international system is more complex than the system that confronted policy makers in 1950 when modern U.S.-Spanish relations were first being crystallized. The strict bipolar system has given way to a multipolar world in which the dichotomy between East and West has become fuzzy and blurred. The emergence of the Third World, regional economic powers such as Japan, West Germany, and Brazil, an integrated Western Europe, a Communist China independent of Russian



hegemony, economic cartels such as OPEC and regional rivalries have complicated the international political picture.

The world community, as described by the U.S. State Department, has become interdependent and "the products of man's technical genius - weapons of incalculable power, a global economic system, instantaneous communication, a technology that consumes finite resources at an ever expanding rate - have, by compressing this planet, multiplied the consequences of competition." [51] In this world, the United States can no longer overwhelm its problems by superior military force or brute economic strength, for its predominance in physical resources and political power has diminished. In pursuing its national interest, America must take into account the global interest. National security requires global security national prosperity requires an expanding global economy and interdependence requires a higher level of mutual comprehension. The old extremes of world policeman and isolation are no longer feasible. To help shape a world of stability, justice, and international cooperation, therefore, is to further the American national interest. [52] This understanding of the present international system and the position of the United States in it, is prerequisite to an understanding of the current American interest in Spain.

The foundation of the present American relationship with Spain is the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Spain that was entered in force on September 21, 1976 for a period



of five years if both governments agree. [53] It replaced the series of executive agreements which have determined U.S.-Spanish relations since 1953 and has provided an institutional framework to facilitate increased cooperation on defense issues, economic questions, education and cultural affairs, and scientific and technological matters between the two countries. The main purpose of the Treaty for the United States was to assure the continued availability to the United States of three air bases and one naval base in Spain. To this end, various forms of military assistance, sales and other benefits totaling \$1.2 billion are provided over a five year period. In addition, the Treaty created a basis for Spain's future relations with its West European neighbors. It provides for cooperation in defense with the intent of assisting Spain in developing a role which will contribute actively to the defense of the North Atlantic area and to provide transitional institutions to prepare the way for an appropriate Spanish role in NATO. To this end, a combined Planning and Coordination Staff was established to provide contingency plans for Spain in case of a general attack on the West. The United States, in turn, was granted the right to use and maintain the military facilities it had heretofore enjoyed but with some important exceptions. The number of KC-135 tankers in Spain was to be reduced to a maximum of five and the nuclear submarines at the Rota naval base were to be withdrawn by July 1, 1979. In addition, the United States agreed not to store



nuclear weapons or their components on Spanish soil. It is important to note that the defense provisions of the Treaty did not constitute a security guarantee on the part of the United States to defend Spain. They did, however, constitute a recognition of Spain's importance as a part of the western bloc.

The criticism of the Treaty that was expressed during the Senate ratification hearings reflected a shift in emphasis from American security interests in Spain to American political and ideological interests. Although the Treaty had been negotiated for the most part while Franco was still alive, when it was initialed in Madrid on January 24, 1976, movement toward democracy in Spain seemed possible. The main consideration for the Congress in acting on the Treaty was whether or not the relationship embodied in the Treaty would encourage development of Spain into a democracy allied with the United States and Western Europe. The utility of the bases themselves seemed to be barely an issue for most Senators. [54]

Given this foundation to America's present relationship with Spain, the following is a summary of the current American interest in that country.

#### 1. Defense and Security Interests

The contribution of the American military presence in Spain to America's strategic nuclear deterrent is minimal. As discussed previously, American SAC forces in Spain were withdrawn with the advent of the ICBM. Furthermore, in



accordance with the provisions of the 1976 Treaty, American nuclear submarine have been withdrawn from Rota, leaving only Holy Loch, Scotland, available to service America's SSBNs in the Atlantic theater. At the time of the agreement, it was expected that deployment of the new Trident class submarine would eliminate the necessity for basing missile carrying submarines in Spain. With delays in the Trident deployment however, the loss of Rota's nuclear support capability has overloaded facilities at Holy Loch. [55]

Strategic nuclear considerations aside, Spain still has considerable military value for the defense of Europe and the North Atlantic and Mediterranean areas. Spain's geographic position provides for a capability to control the naval and commercial shipping lanes in the western Mediterranean, the Straits of Gibraltar, and the eastern Atlantic. Spain lies astride a major air route between North American on the one hand and NATO's southern flank and the Middle East on the other. In addition, the Pyrenees remain a potential last line of continental defense.

The naval base at Rota provides logistic support for the U.S. Sixth Fleet and supports the U.S. Navy's airborne anti-submarine warfare and ocean surveillance operations. Torrejón air base located just east of Madrid serves as the headquarters of a tactical fighter wing whose aircraft at forward operating bases outside Spain have a nuclear strike mission in the event of war in Europe. Torrejón also serves



as a major staging, reinforcement and logistic airlift base for U.S. forces in Europe, while Zaragoza air base in north-east Spain is used as a tactical fighter training facility and is situated near the Bardenas Reales firing range where gunnery and bombing practice for units in the U.S. Air Force Europe (USAFE) and the U.S. Navy takes place. [56]

It is generally assumed that in the event of a European war, Spanish base facilities would be made available but it is important to remember that activities at the bases are subject to Spanish approval. [57] Spanish membership in NATO would, at least in the case of a European war, make access to these military facilities more secure. As mentioned previously, American policy makers have long considered the potential advantages of Spanish membership in NATO to outweigh the fact that Spain was ruled by an authoritarian regime. With the signing of the 1976 Treaty, the United States made specific provisions for paving the way for Spain's eventual participation in the Western Alliance.

One of the most important benefits to the Alliance, aside from the contribution of the Spanish Armed Forces, would be the inclusion of Spanish territory in the NATO area. According to a Library of Congress Report, "NATO experts generally believe that some of the problems resulting from France's non-participation in NATO's integrated command would be ameliorated. NATO would regain some territorial depth of defense and would enjoy more flexible and dependable lines of logistics and communications. [58]



## 2. Political and World Order Interests

Spanish participation in NATO is part of the larger question of Spanish integration into the Western Community. With Franco's death and the emergence of democracy in Spain, interest in Spain's participation in the councils of Europe increased among Americans, West Europeans and Spaniards alike.

"Joining Europe" has been one of the principal objectives of King Juan Carlos I. [59] To most Spaniards, however, joining Europe is considered a two-sided coin. Spanish participation in the European Common Market has been eagerly supported by all of Spain's political parties and is as much politically as economically motivated. On the other side of the coin, Spain's entry into NATO, although endorsed by the United States and other NATO members, has been the subject of intense political debate within Spain. King Juan Carlos and the minority government have gone on record in favor of joining NATO. Spain's Socialist Worker Party (PSOE) and the Communist Party (PCE) are opposed. This issue and its implications for the Spanish Armed Forces are discussed in Chapter V of this thesis.

The political forces in Spain are aware of the outcome desired by the United States, but, officially at least, the American government has held a low political profile on the issue in the belief that overt pressure would likely be counterproductive. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, has taken an intense interest in pressuring Spain not to join the



NATO alliance. During his first visit to Madrid, for example, Russian Foreign Minister Gromyko in November 1979 made it abundantly clear that Spain's entry into NATO would be considered by the Kremlin to be an unfriendly act upsetting to the "military balance" in Europe. [60]

### 3. Ideological Interests

The democratic evolution in Spain signified an important milestone in the history of Western Europe. With the end of the Colonels' rule in Greece and the dissolution of the Portuguese and Spanish dictatorships, every Western European country is presently in democratic hands for the first time since General Miguel Primo de Rivera's "pronunciamiento" in Spain in 1923.

American support for Spanish democracy, though professed, has been rather low key. Stanley Payne, testifying before the House Committee on International Relations, when questioned on whether the United States has pursued a policy of encouraging Spanish democracy replied, "Oh yes, very definitely so. We talked about this in some detail at the State Department in 1975 and certainly it has been the intention of the American Embassy in Spain to encourage democraticization but not to become involved in any kind of overt way. We let them know we encourage this, that we support it, but that we don't want to intervene or take any overt policy toward the Spanish political process." [61]



This policy is too low key for some Spanish tastes, however. Secretary Haig's casual remark to a group of journalists in Washington during the abortive February 23, 1981 coup in Spain, saying that it was an internal Spanish affair, caused a stir in political circles in Madrid and set off speculation in the Spanish press that the Reagan Administration was indifferent to the fate of the young Spanish democracy. The slip obliged Secretary Haig to make a special trip to Spain in April to emphasize America's support for Spain's democratic transition. [62]

A democratic Spain, while in American ideological interests, might pose a dilemma for the other components of the American interest. The dilemma is created by the fact that Western democracy, by its very nature, implies the possibility for change, changes in government, political parties and therefore in the character and policies of the regime. A democratic system, by giving full play to political forces can lead to instability which is not tolerated in an authoritarian system. According to a Library of Congress report, "It is at least theoretically possible that a democratic system in Spain will raise questions about U.S. investments and or base rights that might not have been raised or at least not given prominence in the Franco era." [63]

#### 4. Economic Interests

In contrast to the Franco era, American economic interests in Spain today are more than a one-way dispersal



of economic aid. Granted, over the five year period of the present treaty, \$1.2 billion will have been spent in aid to Spain, but in 1977 alone, Spain imported approximately \$2.1 billion in American goods. [64]

The American Embassy in Madrid judges Spain to be one of the principal markets for American exports inspite of the depressed state of the Spanish economy. Spanish imports from the United States grew by more than twenty five percent between 1978 and 1979 from \$2.5 billion to \$3.2 billion and by forty-two percent from 1979 to 1980 to a total of \$4.5 billion. [65]

American investment in Spain has also increased over the past few years. General Motors is in the process of locating in Spain its largest new investment (\$2.0 billion) in its corporate history and thus will join Ford Motor Company as a Spanish manufacturer of automobiles for export. U.S. business investments in Spain, valued at some \$2.5 billion, are substantially larger than those of any other nation. [66] Attractive factors for U.S. investment include, competitive labor costs, an important domestic market, future integration into European Community (American multinationals are setting up plants in Spain in the hope of using that country as a platform for tariff free exports into the much larger EC market) and a welcome mat for foreign investors which includes a number of generous tax and investment incentives. [67]



Future growth of American exports and investment in Spain, however, will depend heavily on whether the Spanish economy can sustain real growth while combating serious inflation, high unemployment and persistent balance of payments deficits. The ability of Spain to deal with its economic problems will in turn be affected by whatever political turmoil and uncertainties accompany its continued democratic evolution.

As I have attempted to illustrate, American interests in Spain are complex and interdependent and have required trade-offs among the several components of the national interest. There has been a shift in the relative weights of these components in determining American foreign policy toward Spain. The almost complete domination of security and defense interests in defining our foreign policy objectives toward Franco Spain has given way to a more balanced appraisal of the American interest in Spain. The relative importance of economic, ideological and political interests has increased, while American security interests, although still perhaps America's largest stake in Spain, have diminished.

America's most immediate foreign policy objective in Spain is the renegotiation of the 1976 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation which "expired" in September 1981. Spain seems determined to win two concessions during the negotiations; equal treatment with America's other allies, which has political and economic significance as well as military, and



access to modern weapons and new technology to continue the modernization of Spain's Armed Forces. [68] Specific issues Spain is likely to raise include increased Spanish sovereignty and control over U.S. base facilities in Spain, pressure on the United States for a defense commitment to Spain, a commitment to seek a trade balance between the two countries and a more equitable credit arrangement which, according to Spanish officials, has been disappointing in the past. [69]

The United States continues to support Spain's entry into NATO, recognizing, however, that the decision rests with the Spanish people. The present government of Calvo Sotelo has accelerated Spain's application for membership, and on December 10, 1981, Spain received a formal invitation to join from NATO. With Spain's acceptance of the invitation likely, it can be expected that the United States will take the lead in integrating the Spanish Armed Forces into the NATO command structure. [70]

Spanish integration into the West is very much an American interest and will continue to be encouraged by U.S. policymakers. It is apparent that as Spanish democracy developed so has Spain's own perception of its role in the world and its willingness to take its place among the West's other democracies. The success of Spain's integration is dependent upon the continued success of its democratic evolution. The resolution by the Spanish people of their economic, terrorist, and political problems is crucial to continued



democratic progress in Spain. The success or failure of their efforts will in turn influence any future appraisal of the American national interest in Spain.



### III. THE SPANISH ARMED FORCES

As mentioned previously, the reaction of the Spanish military to Spain's democratic transition and the potential threat the military poses to Spain's democratic viability are the central themes of this thesis. This chapter focuses upon the Spanish Armed Forces as an institution within Spanish society. Following a brief summary of Spain's present defense organization, the role of the military under the Franco regime is discussed. This, in turn, is followed by an analysis of the military in democratic Spain with particular attention paid to the reaction of the armed services to Spain's political transformation following Franco's death, their response to democratic change and liberalization, and the government's early efforts to incorporate the military into the democratization process.

#### A. SPAIN'S DEFENSE ORGANIZATION

The supreme command of the Spanish Armed Forces, under Article 62 of the new Spanish Constitution, rests with the Head of State, King Juan Carlos I. To assist the King, the office of Deputy Prime Minister for Defense Affairs was created in 1977. In contrast to the Franco era, during which the Army, Navy, and Air Force were organized under separate and independent ministries, the present defense organization, established by decree on July 4, 1977, combined all three services under a single Minister of Defense. [71]



The mission of the Armed Services, established in Article 8 of the Constitution, is to "guarantee Spain's sovereignty and independence, maintain its territorial integrity, and ensure that the Constitution is not violated." Spain's domestic security forces, the Guardia Civil (Civil Guard) and the newly reformed National Police (formerly the Armed Police) are responsible to the government for the protection of the rights of the individual and for ensuring internal security. [72]

Formerly considered part of the Armed Services, the Guardia Civil and the National Police are no longer indentified with the Ministry of Defense. As a result of a bill passed by the Cortes in 1980, these groups were reorganized under the Minister of the Interior. This change was meant to break-up the powerful armed forces in an attempt to ensure that the two sections would operate on different planes, one dealing with external defense, the other with internal security. The same bill further stated that neither recruits nor officers of the Guardia Civil or National Police would, in the future, be drawn from the Army as was previous policy. The leadership of both organizations, however, was left untouched, thus leaving an Army general in command. [73]

Of Spain's estimated 342,000 men in the armed forces, by far the largest percentage are in the Army with 255,000 (190,000 conscripts) followed by the Navy with 49,000 (including 12,500 Marines and 40,000 conscripts), and the Air Force



with 38,000. [74] The Spanish Army is made up of three major groups, a Rapid Intervention Group, trained and equipped for "conventional and limited nuclear war," a Territorial Defense Force, organized to reinforce the rapid intervention forces and specially trained to defend the country in both conventional and guerrilla warfare, and a General Reserve whose purpose is to reinforce the larger units above. The Spanish mainland is divided into nine military regions with a brigade of the territorial defense force acting as garrison for each. The highest authority in the Army chain of command is the Army Chief of Staff who is politically under the authority of the Minister of Defense. [75]

Command of the Navy is vested in the Naval Chief of Staff. Reporting directly to him are the commanders of four maritime zones, the Bay of Biscay, Straits of Gibraltar, Mediterranean, and Canary Islands, and the Commander of the Fleet. The fleet is divided into three commands, an Escort Command, an Amphibious Command, and an Aviation Command. The Marine Corps is a special force within the Navy and is under the operational command of the Commander of the Fleet. [76]

The Spanish Air Force is commanded by the Air Force Chief of Staff. Four operational commands exist. They are the Air Defense Command, with headquarters in Madrid, consisting of five interceptor squadrons equipped with American F-4C Phantom and French Mirage III and Mirage F-1 aircraft; a Tactical Command, headquartered in Seville, is composed of a



fighter-bomber wing and a maritime patrol wing which are responsible for providing air support to the surface forces; a Transport Command, which supports all three branches of the armed forces and includes catastrophe relief, evacuation and rescue among its missions; and the Canaries Command, which was created to carry out the tasks of the other three Air Force commands in the Canary Islands zone. [77]

Spain's para-military forces number 64,000 in the Guardia Civil and 40,000 in the National Police. [78] The Guardia Civil is responsible for policing all rural areas, control of ports and frontiers, and for highway traffic. It is commanded by a lieutenant general of the Army. The militarized National Police, on the other hand, is responsible for policing all population centers of over 30,000 inhabitants. [79]

#### B. THE MILITARY UNDER FRANCO

During the Franco era, the armed forces, and in particular the Army, viewed themselves as the arbiters of politics and as the guarantors of stability in Spain. The Fundamental Laws of the State, a series of seven laws enacted over a thirty year period which taken together made up the Spanish Constitution of the Franco regime, institutionalized the role of the armed forces.\* Under Article 32 of the Organic Law

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\*The seven laws were The Principles of the National Movement (15 May 1958), the Charter of the Spanish People (17 July 1945, modified 10 January 1967), the Labor Charter (9 March 1938, modified 10 January 1967), the Organic Law of



of the State, "the Armed Forces of the Nation, consisting of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Police, guarantee the unity and independence of the country, the integrity of her territory, the national security, and the defense of the institutional system." [81]

The armed forces were given a place, either by law or in practice, on all the major bodies of the Franco regime. These included the Council of the Realm - a body created to assist Franco as Head of State in all matters pertaining to his office - in which the military was represented by the longest serving Captain General or Lieutenant General in the Armed Services and by the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staffs; the Council of Ministers (Cabinet) which included the Ministers of the Army, Navy and Air Force, men who were identified intimately and exclusively with the military: and the Cortes - Franco's unicameral legislature - among whose members were included the Cabinet and the President of the Supreme Court of Military Justice. [82]

In any account of power groups in Franco Spain, the Armed Forces must come first. Historically, decisive power in Spain lies not with political bargaining or moral authority, but with physical force, a commodity of which the Armed Forces

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the State (10 January 1967), the Law of the Cortes (17 July 1942, modified 9 March 1946 and 10 January 1967), the Law on the Succession to the Head of State (7 July 1947, modified 10 January 1967) and the Law on the Referendum (22 October 1945). [80]



enjoyed a near monopoly. For over a century preceeding Franco's reign, the military had been persistently involved in the political affairs of the Spanish state. Through coups, mutinies or "pronunciamientos," the military was either the instigator of or the major participant in most of the governmental changes between 1814 and the Civil War of the 1930's. The loss of external missions that accompanied the dissolution of the Spanish Empire further reeinforced the military's growing internal role in Spanish society. The Riff war of the early twentieth century (which was the last major involvement by the Spanish armed forces in an overseas mission) was ineptly managed by successive civilian governments and fueled the Spanish officer corps' inherent distrust of civilian politicians and governments.

As Arthur P. Whitaker wrote, "while all governments may rest on force in the last instance, Franco rested on it from first to last." [83] Created by the military in the first place, the Franco regime relied upon the Army above all else in preserving its long life. It was the Army that brought Franco to power during the Civil War and it was the Army that kept him there.

Unlike other Chiefs of State who are their nation's Commanders in Chief but who usually delegate the running of the military to their subordinates, Franco always played a personal role in the Armed Forces. Aware of the impact the Spanish military had on domestic politics in the 19th and



early 20th centuries, Franco managed to keep the Armed Forces out of politics, making it, in effect, one of the mainstays of his regime. Key military appointments went to those who served with Franco during the Civil War and who remained loyal to him and the War's "crusading spirit" that saved Spain from the evils of republicanism, liberalism, and communism. Like most professional soldiers, Franco's Generals held order and discipline in great esteem, but uppermost in their propensities were nationalism, the preservation of the integrity of the Spanish state, and the maintenance of the political status quo. [84] Officers who joined the Army after the Civil War were thoroughly indoctrinated in Francoism, with many eventually owing their careers to Franco. As a result, a senior officer corps developed that tended to be ignorant of the outside world - a condition reinforced by Spain's ostracism following World War II - and deeply contemptuous of civilians and liberal societies.

Under Franco the Army was deployed more like a police force than as a defender against external aggression. Army officers loyal to Franco were placed in charge of the Civil Guard and Armed Police, whose mission appeared more in line with the repression of dissent than of crime. These forces were particularly repressive in those regions, such as the Basque Provinces and Catalonia, which opposed Franco most strongly during the Civil War.



The Spanish Army under Franco suffered from too many generals and antiquated equipment, leaving it far behind the modern mobile armies of other European nations. Yet, throughout this era, the Army's monopoly of substantial armed strength and, as John Coverdale observed, "the almost universal conviction that it would use force if necessary," made it a critical factor in delineating the parameters within which political groups could maneuver. "No responsible government official or opposition figure was likely to take a step or make a proposal which seemed destined to provoke an Army intervention." [85] Thus, while the Army never directly intervened in Spanish politics under Franco, the acknowledgement of the threat it posed inhibited reform and helped Franco maintain the political status quo in Spain.

### C. THE MILITARY AND DEMOCRATIC SPAIN

The Spanish transition to democracy as described previously, was engineered primarily by two men, King Juan Carlos I and his Premier, Adolfo Suárez. From the time of Franco's death to the signing into law of the new Constitution in December 1978, this political transformation was made from within the existing political order inherited from the Franco regime. Because there was no clear-cut break with the past, those senior generals and admirals whose views and careers had been shaped under and by the Franco regime, remained in command of Spain's military forces. [86]



Spain, however, had outgrown the Franco regime and was anxious to take its rightful place among the free and democratic nations of Europe. By the mid-1970's, broad currents of mass and elite opinion favored democracy for Spain. Even within the armed services, elements of unrest had begun to appear. In July 1975, nine Spanish officers, members of a leftist "Spanish Military Union," were arrested and tried for sedition. [87] This is not to suggest that there existed in the Spanish Army anything even remotely comparable to the left-wing groups that dominated the Portuguese army and rebelled in 1974. Spanish officers, however, were nonetheless discontented. Pay below flag rank was quite low and promotion opportunities, limited by an advancement system that encouraged seniority, resulted in a command structure top heavy with aged generals and admirals. [88]

Among young Army officers, the fact that the Army was without an effective modern defense mission also proved disconcerting. While the Navy and Air Force had been successfully modernized and through joint exercises with U.S. and other European forces had achieved a sense of professionalism comparable with their European counterparts, the Army was poorly equipped, poorly trained, and limited primarily to garrison duty throughout Spain. As a result, the Spanish Army lagged behind the armies of Western Europe and developed an inward-looking mentality, which was especially prevalent among its senior officers. [89]



The Spanish senior officer corps remained a solidly entrenched institution which over the years had become effectively isolated from the fabric of Spanish society. Junior military officers, however, were much more integrated into the social whole. Many were forced by their low pay to take second jobs and function as part of Spain's wider and changing society. In addition, their daily contact with each year's class of conscripts, in a country with universal military service, further enhanced their social and philosophical separation from their superiors.

By and large, the Spanish Armed Forces acquiesced to the transition to democracy but not without adverse reaction from the more conservative members of the military elite. A key figure in gaining the military's acceptance of democratic reform was King Juan Carlos I. Juan Carlos was educated in the academies of Spain's three services and many of his closest friends were young military officers with whom he had gone to school. [90] By cultivating the officer corps' allegiance to the Crown and by indicating early on his support for the restoration of democracy, Juan Carlos was able to obtain in September 1976 the reluctant support of the nation's military leaders for the government's reform program.

This support was not without challenge, however, with resistance to the King's and Prime Minister Suárez's program coming from conservative General Fernando de Santiago, the First Vice Premier for Defense and the military's top



representative in the Cabinet. According to David Jordan, "When Santiago continued to drag his feet by invoking the name of Franco and by writing a letter to other generals saying that the reforms threatened chaos and the return of the communists and anarchists defeated by Franco in the Civil War", he was fired. [91] He was replaced by General Manuel Guitérrez Mellado, a close supporter of Juan Carlos and a liberal among high-ranking Spanish officers. [82]

Santiago's forced resignation caused some unrest among other military leaders, but it failed to swing them over to opposition to the King and the government. When Lieutenant General Carlos Iniesta, a former head of the Guardia Civil openly supported Santiago, he too was dismissed. As John Coverdale observed, the King's "personal popularity among the military and his prestige as the incarnation of the legitimate authority of the state proved to be more influential than the generals' aversion to democratic reform." By demonstrating its strength in the face of conservative military opinion, the King's government won for itself freedom to maneuver in the future. [93]

The King and his Prime Minister continued their efforts to gain unchallenged control of the armed forces and the police. Lieutenant General Guitérrez Mellado, Santiago's replacement, was given a free hand to make the armed forces more compatible with those of NATO, an indication of the Monarchy's hope to integrate Spain into Western Europe and to define a new modern



defense mission which would enable it to take the Army out of politics and the internal affairs of the state. In addition, other ultra-conservative military leaders were replaced by men of more moderate or liberal credentials. Positions that were affected included the commands of various military regions, the Commander of the Guardia Civil and the Army Chief of Staff. [94]

These efforts to neutralize the armed forces became critical when the government decided to legalize the Communist Party of Spain (PCE) in April 1977. Prime Minister Suárez had little choice in this matter for he wanted the upcoming June parliamentary elections to appear democratic to the outside world. The move was also necessary to ensure the PSOE's participation in the election and to avoid leftist rioting. [95]

The reaction to the legalization of the PCE was intense, especially in the Army. The Minister of the Navy, an admiral, resigned over the issue and the Supreme Council of the Army proclaimed its repulsion over the legalization. In a position paper presented to the King and the Prime Minister and leaked to the press, the Council said, "The legalization of the Communist Party produced a general repulsion in all units of the Army. Nevertheless, in view of the national interests of a higher order, the accomplished fact is accepted in a disciplined way. The Council deems it necessary to inform the Government that the Army, unanimously united, considers it an undeniable duty to defend the unity of the nation, its flag



the integrity of its institutions, and the good name of the Armed Forces." [96] What the Army was saying, as Stanley Meisler acutely observed, was that "it accepted legalization out of patriotism but still considered itself to be a superior political force empowered to monitor decisions of the government and to intervene in some way." [97] Yet, the Army did not intervene, proving the wisdom of the governments appointment to key command positions senior officers favoring democratization.

Following the promulgation of the new Constitution, Suárez's government continued its policy of military reform. A commission was appointed in September 1979 to make recommendations on ways of professionalizing the officer corps. In order to control the excess officers in certain ranks, the Defense Ministry restructured the promotion system around one based on merit instead of seniority. As additional steps to professionalize the Army, the Guardia Civil and the National Police were transferred to the Ministry of the Interior, a move discussed previously, and a civilian, Agustin Rodríguez Sahagin, was made Minister of Defense following the March 1979 elections. [98]

Despite the efforts by Suárez and the King, many military officers remained disturbed by the ease with which Suárez had dismantled the institutions of Franco. In addition to their displeasure over the legalization of the communists, the liberal excesses that are associated with democratic societies,



such as crime, pornography and labor strikes, fostered a perception of moral decadence in Spain among those officers whose values were formulated during Spain's puritannical years and contributed to the military's uneasiness.

When the democratic euphoria subsided following the March 1979 elections amid signs of public apathy, increased political bickering and a general crisis of authority, conservative elements within the armed forces began to assume a more activist pose. The inability of the government and the political parties to effectively resolve major issues confronting the nation caused deep concern among these officers and the regime's ability to govern came into question.

Critical to the growing perception of political inefficiency and instability were the related problems of regional autonomy, which portended the break up of the Spanish state to many officers, and terrorism. Skepticism toward the government and the democratic order increased as the regime and the political parties appeared to vacillate in their response to the terrorist threat, thereby creating a right-wing pressure within the armed forces for the restoration of law and order. It is toward these issues, which have yet to be satisfactorily resolved and which pose the greatest threat to political stability in Spain, that the following chapter is directed.



#### IV. AUTONOMY, TERRORISM AND THE MILITARY

Of the multitude of problems that faced the Spanish government following Franco's death, the related issues of regional autonomy and terrorism have proven to be the most intractable. It is often difficult for outsiders to grasp the severity of the regionalist issue in Spain, for it is not generally understood that, for most of the peninsula's history, the structure of the Spanish government was partially confederal and that centralism was a product of relatively recent times, reaching its peak during the Franco era. Regions and nationalities are thus firmly rooted in Spanish geography and history, having been shaped by the natural features of the country, preserved by the confederal structure of pre-Bourbon Spain, and politicized by the oppression of the Franco regime.

Regionalist demands have persistently surfaced during periods of transition or crisis. They are a major issue during the Second Republic and the Spanish Civil War and following years of suppression by Franco, have once again resurfaced, accompanied this time by a wave of terrorism that has threatened to tear apart the fabric of Spain's new democracy.

It is the intent of this chapter to examine the autonomy issue in Spain. Particular attention is paid to the Suárez regime's attempts to deal with the regionalist demands, the



efforts of Basque terrorists to disrupt any peaceful solution to the problem and the reaction of the Spanish military to the devolution of power and the perceived breakdown of law and order that has accompanied the devolution process.

#### A. REGIONAL AUTONOMY IN SPAIN

According to analyst Stanley Payne, "Spain's geographic position, its lack of involvement in European diplomatic and geopolitical rivalries, its physical obstacles to national unity, and the undynamic pace of its modern culture, all discouraged the development of a strong sense of unified Spanish nationalism." [99] Regional nationalism, on the other hand, although varying in intensity from area to area, has been prevalent in varying degree throughout the history of the Spanish state. Regionalist movements have been most active in Catalonia, a region in northeast Spain of which Barcelona is the capital, and the Basque provinces in the northwest. It was from these regions that pressures for regional autonomy confronted the Suarez government following Franco's death.

The regional autonomy issue is also a manifestation of the traditional cleavage between center and periphery that has characterized modern Spanish politics. The center, made up of those provinces that comprised the historic Kingdom of Castile, have traditionally maintained political power in Spain and have provided the support and leadership for Spain's centralized government. Basques and Catalans, however, have



felt that their respective regions constitute separate national cultures that have been economically and culturally repressed and exploited by the central government in Madrid. The fact that the central region until recently has been among the least modernized areas of Spain, both socially and economically, while both Catalonia and the Basque country have been the most advanced and developed, has exacerbated this tension.

#### 1. Origins of Catalan and Basque Nationalism

The strongest claim for an ethnic identity comes from Catalonia. Up until the Bourbon monarchy, Catalonia retained control of its own affairs. The region was exempt from paying taxes and from providing men to support the Castilian army, and its language, Catalan, was the regional language of both government and culture. The change of dynasty in the early 18th century which brought the Bourbon, Philip V, to the Spanish throne, however, signaled the end of Catalonia's autonomous status within the Spanish monarchy. The new regime applied Castilian laws and institutions to Catalonia and most of the rest of Spain and, as a result, for the first time in history, these areas were integrated into a unified political system. [100]

Catalonia's loss of political autonomy, however, was offset by its growing economic vitality. By 1760, Catalonia was more prosperous than Castile and the pattern of an economically strong, but politically weak periphery and a



politically strong but economically weak center was established. During the crisis occasioned by the French revolution and the Napoleonic wars, Catalonia loyally supported the monarchy. As a result, according to John Coverdale, "a workable equilibrium was reached in which Catalonia could participate in a larger Spanish national undertaking without renouncing altogether its linguistic and ethnic identity."

[101]

During the 19th century, three factors disturbed this equilibrium and planted the seeds of modern Catalan nationalism. First, liberals came to power in Spain and, inspired by Napoleonic France, imposed upon Spain a more centralized government than it had ever known. Second, with the industrial revolution, the economic disparity between the largely agricultural center and the rapidly industrializing north grew more pronounced. The needs of Catalonia and Madrid were no longer harmonious, and Catalans began to view the Madrid government with suspicion and a sense that it had become deficient and inefficient in judgement and rule. Finally, European romanticism and cultural nationalism encouraged Catalans to press for restoration of the Catalan language as the literary as well as popular language of the region. [102]

By the turn of the century, Catalan nationalism assumed political form with parties organized to gain support of the masses. Primarily middle class in origin and support, Catalan nationalism gradually shifted from a right to



left-looking movement and by the end of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship (1930), "Acció Catalana", the left faction of the regionalist movement, had become a major force in Catalan politics.

Catalan nationalism played a leading role in the events which led to the overthrow of the Spanish monarchy and the establishment of the Second Republic. [103] Since supporters of the Republic favored decentralization, Catalonia was granted its greatest measure of autonomy since the pre-Bourbon days. In 1932, a "Statute of Autonomy" was legislated that provided for a Catalan regional government, the Generalitat to be formed which was empowered to control local affairs, schools, social services, police, and civil legislation. In addition, Catalan became "co-official" with Castilian as the language of the region. [104]

In view of these concessions from Madrid, it was not surprising that during the Civil War, Catalonia was one of the major strongholds of the Republic. It is also not surprising that after Franco's victory, Catalan nationalism was severely repressed and did not regain its forceful expression until after Franco's death.

The historic roots of Basque nationalism are likewise deep. The four Basque provinces of Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa, Alava, and Navarra, retained their local customs, institutions, and languages throughout the 16th-18th centuries and were not as affected by Philip V's centralizing measures as was Catalonia.



Local questions continued to be decided locally and taxes were negotiated with the central government and apportioned and collected by provincial assemblies. The "fueros" or local rights of the Basques, therefore, remained relatively well preserved until the Carlist wars of the 19th century. Basques actively participated in Spanish life and supported national institutions and enterprises. Unlike their Catalan counterparts, the Basque provinces, although linked by geographic proximity and a common languages had no common institution nor sense of common identity. The Basque language was limited to domestic usage and Castilian had been used as the language of culture and government since the Middle Ages. [105]

Basque displeasure with Madrid first surfaced during the 19th century when the Spanish government's liberal-centralism challenged Basque autonomy. Basque "fueros" were a major issue in the Carlist Wars, and Basques formed the backbone of the Carlist resistance to liberalism. In the end, liberals in the capital limited the extent of Basque autonomy in favor of Madrid centralism. Basques still retained the right to negotiate taxes and collect them locally but lost most of their other privileges. [106]

An organized Basque nationalist movement emerged toward the end of the 19th century when Sabino Arana Goiri founded the "Partido Nacionalista Vasco" (Basque Nationalist Party) or PNV in 1894. Arana's nationalism was deeply Catholic



and conservative and focused principally on the Basque language and a desire to preserve the ethnic purity of the Basque people. It remained a small movement however, for as John Coverdale explained, "the relatively small size of the region, the weakness of its linguistic base, the integration of Basque elites into national economic and political life ... prohibited the PNV from recruiting mass support prior to the proclamation of the Republic." [107]

Like Catalonia, the Basque region (less Navarra, an area of mixed Basque, Castilian and Catalan population which rejected the statute) was granted autonomy under the Republic. Unlike Catalonia, however, Basque nationalism remained Catholic and conservative in its orientation and when the Civil War broke out, Basque nationalists were confronted with a serious dilemma. Their political and social conservatism made them the natural allies of Franco, yet, their regional aspirations dictated that they support the Republic. In the end, regionalist sentiment prevailed in Álava, Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa, which supported the Republic, while Navarra sided with Franco. [108]

After the war, which ended for the Basques in 1937, all privileges in those provinces that supported the Republic were lost as Franco began a campaign to uproot the remnants of Basque nationalism. Navarra, on the other hand, because of its loyalty to Franco, was permitted to retain its "fueros". The separation of Navarra from the other Basque provinces was a distinction which still clouds Basque politics today.



## 2. Franco and National Unity

It can be argued that the autonomy problem confronting Spain's democratic government is a Franco legacy. Determined to preserve the national unity of Spain and intent on punishing those regions who opposed him during the Civil War, Franco conducted a repressive campaign to stamp out Basque and Catalan nationalism and culture.

Franco's nationalism was essentially defensive and counter-revolutionary. According to Stanley Payne, it was "a response to the divisiveness and revolutionary anti-traditionalism of the left more than the expression of a spontaneous and unified assertion of Spanish nationalism on the peninsular or international level." "Thus, the (Franco) government," Payne concluded, "has proven psychologically and culturally unable to absorb the sympathies of regional nationalists on the peripheries of Spain, despite, or because of, the coercive means at its disposal." [109]

At first, regionalism was a complete anathema to Franco. Publication and education in regional languages was banned. Non-Castilian books were taken from libraries and burned, and street signs in Basque and Catalan were torn down. Celebrations of historic dates in regional history were suppressed by Franco's police. As the Franco regime attempted to shed some of its more obvious authoritarian aspects in the 1950's and 1960's, however it gradually relaxed its restrictions on the use of regional languages. Books and



periodicals could appear once again and schools were eventually allowed to teach the regional language. Castilian remained the language of instruction for all other subjects, however, and the regions continued to be governed from Madrid without any concession to Catalan or Basque aspirations for control of their own affairs. [110]

In Catalonia, Franco's repression drove regionalist groups into coalition with other expressions of anti-Franco sentiment. The most general grudge held by Catalans remained linguistic and cultural, especially among the Catalan writers and intellectuals who felt that their native language was threatened with extinction. Another grudge, heard mostly in Barcelona, concerned taxes and centered around the question of why inhabitants of industrial areas had to pay higher taxes yet received a disproportionately small share of the benefits from Madrid. Furthermore, a sense of economic superiority developed in Catalonia which, along with the Basque country, had set the pace of Spain's modernization. As a result, "the disproportion between political and economic power caused by the relative economic weakness of the political center contributed to the discontent of the periphery which felt its interests would be better served by a decentralized system in which decisions affecting the region could be taken at the regional level." [111]

While Catalans possessed a strong sense of ethnic identity, the Basques, on the other hand, were not as firm



in their linguistic and cultural ties. Whereas the Catalan provincial dialect is a romance language and easily adapted to contemporary culture, Euskera, with its obscure roots, is extremely hard either to learn or adapt. As a 1970 survey indicated, only forty nine percent of the housewives in the Basque country were able to understand their regional language compared to ninety percent in Catalonia. [112] The large influx of workers from other parts of Spain that accompanied the Basque region's industrialization further diluted the Basque identity. Franco's repression, however, more than other factors, solidified the inherently weak Basque nationalist movement and rallied non-nationalists to the regionalists' cause.

The more difficult Franco made it for the Basques to pursue the "Euzko" way of life, the more they clung to it. As George Hills observed, "there were more 'Euzkaldunak' and 'Euzkaltzalek' - speakers and lovers of the Basque language - when after 30 years (Franco) was forced to relax his prohibition of it than at any time these last two centuries." In addition, the severity of Franco's repressive measures, particularly against striking Basque workers, convinced many non Basques that the regionalists were right and "all evil" did in fact stem from Madrid. By the time of Franco's death, the Basque traditional desire, "to be left alone and in peace and to fight for that peace," had gained widespread support among immigrants as well as natives. [113]



Despite Franco's repression, regionalism remained an active political force in the Basque country and Catalonia. With the loosening of the restraints that prohibited the manifestation of regional differences under the Franco regime, regionalists once more gave forceful expression to their demands. Accompanied by a rise in terrorism by Basque extremists, these demands were a major issue that needed resolution by Spain's new democratic government.

### 3. Spanish Democracy and Devolution

Following Franco's death, demands for autonomy were coupled with demands for political amnesty. The amnesty issue was particularly important to the Basques. An upsurge of Basque nationalist activity and terrorism in the late Franco years resulted in the arrest of many Basque activists. The general pardon announced by the government to mark Juan Carlos' ascension as king and the amnesty granted by the Suarez government in July 1976 did not extend to all political prisoners and excluded many Basque terrorists. Basque protests continued throughout this period, demanding full amnesty for all political prisoners. The violence that accompanied police efforts to control these demonstrations, marches, and strikes alienated many moderate Basques and fostered more hatred of the police and Guardia Civil among the Basque populace which further fueled the fires of Basque nationalism. The government, in an effort to calm the domestic scene prior to the June 1977 parliamentary elections, eventually offered exile



to those activists and terrorists who were still in prison.

As the parliamentary elections approached, local political groups and parties proliferated in the Basque country. Virtually all parties that presented candidates for election supported autonomy in one form or another. The traditional Basque Nationalist Party (PNV), which had dominated Basque politics during the republic, combined its centrist economic and social policies with a vigorous demand for autonomy, calling for the immediate restoration of the statute of autonomy granted Basques by the Republic in 1936. The PNV was highly visible in Guipuzcoa and Vizcaya but failed to generate much enthusiasm in the other two Basque provinces of Álava and Navarra. [114]

In Catalonia, the proliferation of local and regional parties was likewise great. As in the Basque country, regional autonomy was a dominant theme in most political speeches, and no party that showed any strength in the region failed to support it.

The major parties with a national following, with the exception of the right-wing Alianza Popular (AP), also endorsed some measure of regional autonomy in an effort to gain support in Spain's highly industrialized and populated regions. The Socialists (PSOE) and the Communists (PCE) both stressed their commitment to a federal structure for Spain. The center UCD was vague and cautious in its declarations



about autonomy, but did proclaim its commitment to regional autonomy "for all regions whose history, geography, and economic situation might lead them to deserve it." [115]

The rejection of the Francoist right in the elections was interpreted in Basque country and Catalonia as an endorsement for regional autonomy. The response of the new government to the autonomy demands was progressive but cautious. Premier Suárez was forced to walk a fine line between granting measures of autonomy to appease regional pressure and assuring forces of the right that the integrity of the Spanish state would remain intact. Complicating the picture and overshadowing the entire devolution process was the growing terrorism of the leftist ETA, the most extreme expression of Basque nationalism. The ETA consistently rejected any constitutional arrangement short of complete independence for the Basque provinces and state socialism. Government measures to neutralize the terrorists, which included some heavy-handed tactics by the police and Guardia Civil, exacerbated tensions between the region and Madrid and made the resolution of the Basque autonomy question all the more difficult.

The first step the government took to resolve the autonomy problem following the June 1977 elections was to grant pre-autonomy status to those regions which desired it. In essence, this measure was largely symbolic and was meant as a pledge for true autonomy after the new constitution was approved.



In Catalonia, the statute re-established the Generalitat and Josep Tarradellas, the elderly leader of the Catalan government-in-exile, returned as its President (October 24, 1977). Although the Generalitat had no real legislative power and was primarily consultive in function, its restoration signified recognition of the distinctive political character of the region and an awareness of Catalan demands for autonomy. Tarradellas and other Catalan nationalists were apparently pleased with the gesture and content to wait until the new Constitution was approved for more definitive autonomy measures. [116]

The government's negotiations with the Basques over a similar pre-autonomy statute, on the other hand, ran into some serious problems. The Basques demanded a measure of fiscal autonomy immediately and the inclusion of the province of Navarra into the Basque region. Suárez and the Basques eventually compromised and drafted a statute that included a vague reference to the "desirability of future fiscal autonomy" but foresaw the incorporation of Navarra into the Basque region. Problems with this draft arose, however, since a substantial number of Navarese wanted no part of their province's inclusion in the Basque region. Demonstrations and counter-demonstrations were staged, the ETA threatened more violence, and the UCD delegates from Navarra pressured the government to preserve their province from inclusion in an autonomous Basque region. The issue was resolved, at



least temporarily, by both sides agreeing that a referendum in Navarra should decide the issue. [117]

If the government expected the pre-autonomy statute and the subsequent formation of a Basque council to dampen unrest in the Basque country, it was mistaken. Unlike the Catalans, the Basques were unwilling to take these symbolic gestures as a pledge of real autonomy after the Constitution was approved. Marches, demonstrations, and terrorist violence continued throughout 1978 as politics in the Basque country became increasingly polarized and radicalized. The Armed Police reaction to the terrorism became increasingly repressive and violent, instigating new protests and demands from Basques for the government to get its police under control.

Political power in the Basque country following the June 1977 elections was shared by the PSOE, the UCD and the PNV, with the PNV and PSOE combining forces in support of Basque autonomy. (Table 3)

Table 3: Basque Country, Election to Congress of Deputies, June 1977 [118]

Party or Group	Percent of Popular Vote	Number of Seats
PSOE	24.9	9
PNV	23.4	8
UCD	15.8	7
extreme left	11.0	1
AP	7.2	1
all others	17.7	0



Although PNV leaders regularly condemned ETA violence and assassinations, they were reluctant to support government actions to bring them to a halt. To some observers, this was an indication that the PNV was not clear on what role they saw ETA violence playing in the advancement of their own aims. El Pais, a liberal Madrid daily, for example, charged the PNV with encouraging, consciously or otherwise, a policy which, in the final analysis, gave much support to the terrorists actions. [119] It was possible that the PNV sought to utilize ETA violence as leverage to extract greater political concessions from Madrid. PNV demands that an autonomous Basque police force replace the hated Guardia Civil and Armed Police, for example, seemed to support this possibility. It is also debatable whether the PNV had a clear conception of what its short-term and long-term goals were. Obviously in favor of Basque autonomy, there was some indication, however, that PNV nationalists desired something more. A PNV proclamation signed on the Basque national day (March 26, 1978), desiring recognition of Basque "sovereignty" as an essential precondition to the pacification of the region, indicated a growing radicalization of Basque demands.

The new Spanish Constitution, drafted during this period and signed into force in December 1978, insisted on the "indissoluble unity of the Spanish nation" but also recognized and guaranteed "the right to autonomy of the nationalities and regions which comprised it" (Article 2). The Constitution provided several mechanisms by which autonomy



could be reached and listed in detail the powers that could be devolved to the regions (Article 148) and the powers and rights to be exclusively retained by the state (Article 149). In essence, it allowed the regions of Catalonia and the Basque country to develop autonomy rather quickly while the process for other regions desiring some measure of local government would be much slower.

For the Basques and the Catalans, the road to autonomy was through application of Article 151. Commissions representing the regions met with those representing the Cortes to draft statutes of autonomy. These statutes were accepted by regional referendum in October 1979 and subsequently ratified by the Cortes and by the King. Elections for the newly created regional governments were held in May 1980.

Negotiations with Catalonia over the draft statute were essentially straightforward and subject to little or no criticism. [120] Negotiations between the Basques and the government, on the other hand, were particularly difficult. To many Basques the government appeared to be dragging its feet on autonomy while a rise of ETA terrorism complicated the process. Also disturbing to the government was the emergence of a new radical Basque party, the "Herri Batasuna" (One Homeland) which garnered one-third of the nationalist vote in the March 1979 elections and threatened to vie with the more moderate PNV for Basque leadership. [121]



Negotiations improved that summer when moderate Carlos Guraicoetexa was elected President of the Basque Council and Suarez himself assumed the role of expeditor and took charge of the negotiating process.

The new autonomy statute was generous to the Basques, who received what they asked for short of independence and within the constraints of the Constitution. The statute granted the new Basque Autonomous Community (Álava, Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa) the power through its parliament and government to decide for itself matters relating to a wide variety of political, social, and economic affairs. They were granted their own police force, powers to raise and spend taxes, powers over industrial and economic policy, town and country planning, energy resources, public works, agriculture and fisheries, social services, culture and state savings banks. In addition, the statute reaffirmed that the Navarra question would be settled by referendum. In exchange for these rights, the Basques accepted Spanish sovereignty over the region and the powers reserved for the State as delineated in Article 149 of the Constitution. [122]

Implementation of the provisions of the Basque autonomy statute was slow, however, with the Suárez government showing no sense of urgency in the process of devolving to the community the promised administrative functions. In January 1980, PNV representatives to the Cortes walked out of the Spanish parliament to protest the government's foot



dragging. [123] The regional elections of March 1980 were a further indication of Basque disaffection with Madrid. Both major 'Spanish' parties, the UCD and PSOE, were heavy losers while the PNV gained 38% of the vote, up from 27% in the 1979 elections, and emerged as the predominant political power in the Basque country. [124]

The Basque autonomy issue was a political headache for Suarez and his UCD government. The political right, which criticized the Suárez government for attempting to balkanize Spain, pressured Suárez to slow down the decentralization process. The cabinet's decision in January 1980 to forestall Andalusian autonomy was a calculated move to ease this pressure. Although this decision probably cost the UCD votes in this impoverished region it was hoped that a corresponding gain in Spain's Castilian heartland would be more than offsetting. [125]

In negotiations with the Basques, tax privileges and the formation of a Basque police force proved to be the most serious stumbling blocks in implementing the Autonomy Statute. Throughout 1980 negotiations over the transfer of these powers were slow and tortuous bringing charges of paternalism and lack of good faith against the government by Garaicoetxea the current President of the Basque government. Unable to put a clamp on Basque terrorism, which continued despite the autonomy statute, and facing the loss of political credibility not only among Basques but also from among the Spanish right



and left, Suárez eventually decided to gamble on Garaicoetxea and the PNV to govern and eventually pacify the troubled region. In January 1981, a breakthrough was achieved when an agreement between the two parties on Basque fiscal powers was reached and a new impetus was given to getting a Basque police force established. [126] If the past was any guide, however, technical hitches and misunderstandings could have delayed or complicated the carrying out of these agreements. As it happened, the February 1981 coup attempt forced both sides to temporarily accept a slowdown in the devolution process.

The government's biggest headache, by far has been terrorism. Throughout the entire devolution process, ETA terrorism has been a serious complicating factor. It has provoked a right wing backlash, fostered anti-Madrid sentiment in the Basque country, alienated Spanish military and law enforcement agencies, brought into question the government's ability to govern, and encouraged demands for the declaration of a state of emergency in the Basque region and for military intervention to preserve law and order. The Suárez government's inability to resolve the problem cost Suarez political support, contributed to his decision to resign, and set the stage for the February 1981 coup attempt. To appreciate the impact of the ETA and terrorism on the Spanish political climate, a closer look at its organization, goals, tactics and effectiveness is in order.



## B. THE THREAT FROM THE LEFT - THE ETA

As the principal "angel of death" of the Spanish ultra-left, the Marxist, Basque, separatist, organization, "Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna", (Basque Homeland and Liberty) or ETA, originated in 1952 as a propaganda organ for the then illegal PNV. This new group, initially comprised of radical university students, became disenchanted with the passivity of the moderate PNV and grew increasingly militant as it moved further and farther to the left. In 1958, the ETA broke away from the PNV, and by 1966 it had become an avowedly Marxist, terrorist, regionalist organization. It advocated revolutionary violence, a federation of Basque provinces on both sides of the Pyrenees independent of Spain and France, and a new social order based upon some ill-defined form of Basque socialism. [127]

The ETA's fifth congress in 1967 produced a split between the more nationalist and more socialist factions of the group, with the nationalists claiming that the fight, against Spain and for Basque freedom, was to have precedence over developing a worker-based socialist homeland. The sixth congress of 1970 ratified this split, with the radical nationalists taking the name ETA V (reflecting their claim of the legality of the fifth congress) and the more Marxist-socialist faction the title ETA VI. ETA VI opted for political work among Basque factory workers while the ETA V embarked upon a campaign of terrorism and violence to achieve Basque independence. [128]



Shooting between the Guardia Civil and Basque activists marked the outbreak of violence in 1968. The ETA V, in an act of revenge, killed a hated police inspector, and the Franco regime responded with indiscriminate and widespread arrests. This made the police forces more detested than ever and increased popular sympathy for the ETA. Since then a running war has been maintained between the ETA and the police, a war that has continued up to the present.

It should be noted here, that the Basque hatred of Spain's internal security forces has always been and continues to be one of the underlying factors that lends legitimacy (if not support) to the ETA. Members of the Guardia Civil and Armed Police are never assigned to their home provinces and are generally discouraged from socializing with the local population of their garrison. As a result, in the Basque country the forces of law and order are non-Basques. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Guardia Civil has been regarded by many Basques as an army of occupation and the chief repressive arm of the regime.

Violence mounted during the last years of the Franco regime, culminating with the ETA V's assassination of Prime Minister Carrero Blanco in December 1973. This bold stroke, which established the ETA's terrorist reputation, provoked Franco to strike back brutally. Mass arrests, military trials without appeal, and executions made Spain appear at the time of Franco's death to be more openly repressive than it had been in many years.



Throughout Spain's transition to democracy ETA violence continued with hundreds of people falling victim to terrorism. In 1977, however, the ETA once again split into two factions. A more "moderate" faction, the ETA-politico/militar (ETA-p/m) believed it was necessary to link armed struggle with above ground political activity. The military wing, ETA-militar (ETA-m), remained pessimistic about political change and pursued a purely violent strategy.

From the beginning, the ETA-m has refused to accept the possibility of democratic change in Spain and has geared its terrorism toward thwarting democratic reform and any peaceful moves toward autonomy in the Basque country. To ETA militants, Spanish democracy is an anathema. In a communique following the June 1977 parliamentary elections, the ETA-militar had this to say about Spain's new democracy; "The ETA believes that its actions will not destabilize the democracy because there is no democracy in Spain. We have the same military dictatorship only with a smile...our people understand now that the elections were nothing more than a fraud to legitimate as democratic a regime that is fundamentally a military dictatorship." [129]

In a free and open society, ETA terrorists would be rebels without a cause, for deliverance from oppression could no longer be offered to the Basque people as the rationale for bloodshed and brute force. ETA gunmen are not primarily champions of an ideology. They champion their cause to



potential supporters more by reference to years of oppression than by claiming to offer solutions to today's problems. They draw their power from links of blood, not ideas, and from the great appeal of nationalism.

The ETA-m subscribes to the theory that violence will provoke repression, repression more violence, with the vicious circle continuing and becoming wider and wider. Their ultimate goal remains an independent, socialist Basque nation. As long as progress toward Basque autonomy and democracy continues, however, they realize that they will never get the support of the moderate Basque majority. Their only hope, therefore, is to incite repression from Madrid by provoking the Army into a coup which would alienate the Basque majority and rekindle the fires of Basque nationalism.

In an effort to get Spain's security forces to shoot back wildly and to incite a military reprisal, the targets of the ETA's assassins have been predominantly military and police personnel. Victims have ranged from off-duty Guardia Civil patrolmen to Army generals and a Supreme Court Justice.

The murder of Madrid's military governor, General Constantino Ortin Gil, on January 3, 1979, is indicative of the ETA's motives. General Ortin was typical of the non-political backbone of Spain's officer corps which has respected the King's injunction to stay aloof from politics during the country's transition from dictatorship to democracy. His assassination was clearly meant to provoke unrest among this



faction of the military and create additional pressure for military intervention in Spain's politics. [130] Furthermore, every attack on the Army made it much more difficult for the Suárez government (because it did not want to seem to be yielding to terrorist pressure) to concede greater measures of autonomy to the Basques. For the ETA, failure of a peaceful devolution process meant, increased tolerance (if not support) for their cause among the Basque populace.

Every measure of progress toward democracy or peaceful settlement of the Basque problem was countered by an ETA act of violence. Between Franco's death and the June 1977 elections, sixty-seven Spaniards died from political violence, primarily at the hands of the ETA. [131] In 1978, a year of large-scale ETA offensives, ETA violence reached a crescendo prior to the December constitutional referendum. During the month of November alone, ETA terrorists killed fifteen and wounded nineteen others. [132]

Likewise, there was no mistaking the ETA-m's purpose as Basque autonomy drew near in 1979. According to Manuel Azcarate of the PCE, as quoted by Claire Sterling in her book The Terror Network, "they (ETA) want the prisons overflowing with Basques again, screams from the torture chambers, the martyrs stigmata. They want Spanish tanks in the streets of Bilbao." They wanted to "Ulsterize Euzkadi," said the militants themselves, referring to the wonders done by Ulster's provisional IRA to keep peace forever out of Northern Ireland.



[133] In 1980 violence continued, with the ETA claiming responsibility for killing more than ninety people in Spain.

[134]

Given this level of violence, how effective has the ETA-m been in achieving its goals? Despite the ETA's terrorism, a transition to democracy has been made and Basque autonomy granted. On the other hand, the ETA has been successful in provoking a public outcry in the Basque country against the government forces of law and order. Basque support of the ETA, however, is tenuous at best, especially as the reality of autonomy draws near. Most Basques resolutely seek home rule, but are moderately conservative socially, economically and religiously. They find the ETA's violent Marxism an anathema and have no desire to jeopardize their high standard of living for the ill-defined, radical socioeconomic order the ETA advocates.

Given its lack of popular support, there is little likelihood that the ETA could overthrow Spanish democracy on its own. The only way for them to achieve power would be in the aftermath of another right-wing dictatorship. The extreme right, although it also lacks popular support, could ride to power on the coattails of a mutinous military. It has been toward the goal of provoking a military coup in Spain that the ETA's efforts have been directed. A military coup that would topple Spain's democratic government and alienate its citizens against Madrid is the ETA's only hope for success.



### C. THE REACTION OF THE RIGHT - THE MILITARY

From the start of Spain's transition to democracy, King Juan Carlos recognized the danger a disaffected military posed to Spain's democratic evolution. In February and April 1977, the King issued decrees forbidding the military to participate in politics or to show public preference for the political options being presented to the nation. It did not take long, however, for the effects of Basque terrorism to cause a reaction from the Spanish armed forces.

In September 1977 a group of important generals met to discuss how to save Spain from chaos, a leftist takeover, and fragmentation by Basque and Catalan nationalists. Included in this group were Generals Santiago and Iniesta, who were previously retired by Juan Carlos because of their intransigent resistance to political reform, and General Jaime Milans del Bosch, commander of a tank division near Madrid and an officer who would play an important role in the February 1981 coup attempt. Of particular concern to these generals was the ETA's fight for an independent Basque homeland. While the generals did not oppose self-rule in the region so long as autonomy was compatible with national unity, the dissolution of the Spanish state would be intolerable and would surely provoke a military response. It was with this in mind that Lieutenant General Mellado, the Minister of Defense, announced at a parade of airborne troops in the spring of 1978 that Spain's unity was indivisible, and that



this unity in no way would be permitted to be broken.

[135]

As Basque assassinations of security and military personnel continued, the government's relations with the military, paramilitary and police forces began to deteriorate. The killing of four law enforcement officers in a single day in August 1978 drew a sharp note from the Professional Police Association (APP) that criticized the government, the political parties, and the trade unions for failing to support the police and thereby contributing to the violence that was taking its toll among Spanish law enforcement officers. [136]

On October 13, 1978, ETA terrorists killed two policemen in Bilboa, bringing the total for the year to 23 including seven in the span of three weeks. At the funeral of their comrades, according to John Coverdale, "some eight hundred of the two thousand members of the Armed Police assigned to Bilbao, staged a demonstration and a sit-in in which they insulted the inspector of the Armed Police, the director general of security and other officials attending the funeral." [137]

Under the strain of the increased tempo of terrorist activity, the discipline of the armed forces appeared to be cracking. In November 1978, a mini-coup attempt was uncovered which apparently included plans to kill Premier Suárez and at least two other cabinet ministers. On the night of November 16, army investigators arrested Guardia Civil



colonel who would lead the seizure of the Cortes in February 1981, and Armed Police Captain Ricardo Saeñz, thereby breaking up the plot. [138]

Additional pressure on the government from the military to restore law and order in Spain came in the aftermath of General Ortin's assassination in January 1979. As reported in the Economist, at General Ortin's funeral "a crowd of some two hundred right-wingers had a field day, chanting Spain, yes , democracy, no, and burning Basque flags while a group of officers seized the coffin and paraded it down the street shouting anti-government slogans." [139] This display brought the sternest rebuke yet from King Juan Carlos who dressed down his senior officers by making it quite clear that the lack of discipline in the military was a far more serious threat to the state than the inevitable political errors of the government. [140] The King's admonition did not stop General Milans del Bosch, however, from complaining publicly "that terrorism was not receiving an adequate response and that the army must intervene when legislative, police and judicial measures were seen to be inefficient." [141]

The Suárez government was placed under extreme pressure on two fronts. The military and security forces demanded more freedom to combat Basque terrorism, while the Basque populace demanded greater control over security personnel and a step up in the autonomy process. Government vacillation brought charges of foot dragging from both sides and



contributed to a loss of political credibility for Suárez and his government. His inability to effectively control terrorism left Suárez open to criticism from both the political left and right. This growing perception of a government incapable of governing colored the events that led to Suárez' resignation and the February 1981 coup attempt.

The influence of the Spanish political right among disaffected military officers has increased as a consequence of Spain's terrorist problem. The leader of the Spanish right is Manuel Fraga Iribaine, a former Franco minister and head of the Popular Alliance. His initial campaign rhetoric focused on a "reds or us" syndrome did not go over well with Spanish voters anxious to bury the Civil War hatchet and to get on with democracy. In response to the increased level of political violence in Spain, however, Fraga shifted his attention to the deterioration of public order, criticizing the Suárez government for the lack of law and order in Spain and for its failure to "protect" Spanish unity. His party has gained the ear of a number of disaffected military officers by playing on the military fears of Basque secessionism and by exploiting the indignation aroused by terrorist attacks on military and police targets. [142]

To the right of Fraga, are several groups of the "ultra-right" who have used the violence of the ultra-left as justification for their own brand of terrorism. Organizations like the neo-fascist New Force Party and the nazi-styled



Falange party have launched a campaign of assassination and terrorist in the northern Basque provinces with ETA supporters and sympathizers their primary victims. In 1980, right-wing violence took twenty-one lives - most of them in the Basque country - including a nineteen year old Basque girl who was kidnapped and interrogated as a suspected ETA informer prior to being brutally murdered. [143]

What has disturbed many Spaniards has been the persistent rumor that the ultra-right terrorists were linked secretly to Spain's security forces. Coupled with the perceived notion that the government was unwilling to investigate terrorism of the right with as much zeal and determination as it did terrorism of the left, this rumor has been used to substantiate charges that the government was bowing to right-wing pressure. [144]

By the end of 1980, therefore, Basque terrorism and an increasingly unhappy military, had placed Suarez in a politically uncomfortable position. His abrupt resignation as Prime Minister in January 1981 and the unsuccessful military coup in February brought into sharp focus the fragile state of Spain's democracy. The coup, its aftermath, and the government's efforts to defuse the military threat and restore Spain's democratic viability are the subjects of analysis in the following chapter.



## V. THE MILITARY AND DEMOCRACY

By the end of 1980, the UCD government headed by Adolfo Suárez had shown itself unable to deal with the terrorist campaign carried on by the ETA. Furthermore, Suárez, himself, was under fire from within his own party which had lost its cohesiveness in the face of Spain's mounting political problems and stagnating economy.

Given to periods of melancholy and isolation and perhaps feeling that he no longer had the confidence of either the King or his party, Suárez resigned as Spain's Prime Minister on January 29, 1981. [145] In a television address to the nation, Suárez gave few clues to his reasons for resigning but left the impression that he felt that he had reached the limit of his usefulness.

The almost five years I have been Prime Minister has taken alot out of me. No other person throughout the last one hundred and fifty years has governed democratically for such a long time. What I have given of myself has served to put together a system of freedoms, a new model of social coexistence and a new model of state... But as frequently happens in history, to carry on with a job in hand requires a change of persons. And I do not want the democratic system...to become just one more interlude in the history of Spain.  
[146]

The possibility has subsequently been raised that Suárez, informed by the Spanish intelligence services that a military plot was afoot, hoped to forestall a coup by removing himself from the political scene. [147] According to James Markham



of the New York Times, highly placed Spanish sources stated that senior military officials demanded that Juan Carlos remove Suárez from office but that the king rejected their entreaties as unconstitutional. [148] Whatever his intentions, Suárez' resignation left an internally divided UCD party and a sizeable political vacuum.

It was within this context that King Juan Carlos embarked on his first trip to the Basque country in early February 1981. The King's visit was taken against the advice of several senior military officers who opposed the visit on the grounds that it consecrated Basque autonomy. With his dignified and cool approach to separatist hecklers, and his firm endorsement of Basque self-government, however, Juan Carlos made a seemingly important contribution to turning Basque opinion away from the ETA and its dreams of an independent Basque nation. [149]

Whatever advantages the government gained from the King's visit were quickly lost, however, when a suspected Basque terrorist died in a Madrid jail, an apparent victim of police torture. [150] His death triggered a general strike which paralyzed industrial and commercial activity in the Basque region. The government dismissed or arrested the police officers involved, but this action did not deter the strike nor prevent several senior police officers, angry at the criticism that was directed at the police from resigning. [151]



This growing tension made the parliamentary endorsement of Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, the new prime minister designate, all the more difficult. Nominated as Suárez' successor by the UCD on February 9th and endorsed by the King on the 10th, Calvo Sotelo was unable to win an absolute majority in a parliamentary vote of confidence on February 20, 1981. Gaining the support of only four deputies outside his own party, Sotelo was opposed by the Communists, Socialists and the regional parties of Basque country and Andalusia while the political right generally abstained rather than go on record as supporting a UCD administration. [152]

It was against this background that some two hundred members of the Guardia Civil led by Lieutenant Colonel Tejero de Molina took over the Spanish parliament on the afternoon of February 23, 1981 as the Cortes was preparing for second vote on Calvo Sotelo's new government. This takeover marked the beginning of the most serious attempt at a military coup in the history of Spain's young democracy.

#### A. THE FEBRUARY COUP AND ITS AFTERMATH

Given the circumstances, it was not surprising that disenchanted elements within the military and Guardia Civil believed that the moment for a coup was a propitious one. Years of terrorist activity had taken its toll of military and Guardia Civil members and the recent criticism of the police by the civilian population and the government had



shortened a number of officers' tempers. To many military officers, it seemed that Spain was on the edge of chaos. The government appeared to be incapable of restoring law and order, and with the resignation of Suarez it was questionable whether an effective government could be formed at all without first calling a general election. Such an election would have favored the Socialists and could have possibly led to a left-wing government in Spain that would have further alienated the Spanish military.

Colonel Tejero's occupation of the Cortes was the first stage of what was essentially a four stage plan. The other stages included, the rallying of Spain's regional military commanders by General Jaime Milans del Bosch, commander of the Valencia region, to support the dissolution of parliament and the creation of a military government in Spain; the occupation of key strategic installations (including the national radio and television center) by Madrid's "Brunete" armored division; and, finally, the acceptance by King Juan Carlos of a military-backed government headed by General Alfonso Armada, the deputy chief of the general staff and for twenty-six years the King's closest military advisor. [153]

Of the four stages, only Tejero's seizure was successful. General Milans del Bosch's involvement in the coup was apparent early on as he declared a state of martial law in Valencia and rolled his tanks into the streets. However, he was unable to convince the remainder of Spain's regional



commanders to follow his lead. Most of them were content to "sit on the fence" until the position of the King could be ascertained and the chances of the coup's success assessed. A unit of the Brunete Division managed to occupy Radio Madrid momentarily, but the majority of the division refused to take part in the insurrection. [154]

The principal weakness of the plot and the reason why the coup failed, however, was that the plotters totally misjudged the King's commitment to democracy. They assumed that Juan Carlos, faced with a fait accompli, would accept General Armada's ultimatum and throw in his lot with the military. When Juan Carlos flatly refused, the plotters had no answer. By cajoling, orders, and threats, the King ensured that his regional commanders knew exactly where he stood and that he was not considering backing the rebels as Generals Milans and Armada had been claiming. Shortly after midnight on the night of the coup, Juan Carlos appeared in his army uniform, and in a nationwide television address pledged his faith in democracy and warned all military commanders to heed the orders of the Joint Chiefs of Staff who were totally loyal to the King. A few minutes later, General Milans withdrew his tanks from the streets of Valencia and by noon the next day, Colonel Tejero, realizing that the plot had failed to generate support, surrendered. [155]

Not only did the plotters misjudge the King and the personal loyalty most senior and middle grade officers felt



toward Juan Carlos, they also misread the temper of the country and the depth of its discontent. As Eusebio Mujal-Leon observed, "discontent certainly existed and many Spaniards desired far greater order in civic life, but there was no mass support for those who wished to bring such order by returning to dictatorship." [156]

Indeed, throughout Spain vocal and visible support for democracy prevailed as millions of people took to the streets of Spain's major cities on February 27 to demonstrate their defense of liberty, democracy and the Constitution. Even in Basque country, the mood was tranquil and in a surprise move, the political arm of the ETA (ETA-P/M) announced an unconditional cease fire and released unharmed three foreign consuls they had abducted following the police torture incident. (The military wing of the ETA however, ambushed three policemen in Bilbao hours after the cease fire was announced.) [157]

The post-putsch euphoria was short-lived however, as the reality of the recent events sunk in. What was particularly alarming to many Spaniards was that only one man, the King, stood between the plotters and their goal. It was painfully obvious that this situation would not be repeated, for if there were to be another coup attempt, the first target, not the last, would be the King. If democracy were to survive, the other institutions of government, the executive and the parliament, needed to be strengthened while the institutional power of the military and security forces required limitation.



Although the military lacked the backing of the people, they nonetheless possessed armed strength required to topple Spain's democratic government.

#### B. DEFUSING THE MILITARY THREAT - HARDLINE OR APPEASEMENT?

The parliamentary approval of Calvo Sotelo and his new government took place a few days after the coup attempt with the new Prime Minister receiving an absolute majority of the vote. The most immediate problem facing the new government was how to defuse the threat the military obviously posed to Spain's democracy. The grievances that prompted members of the military and Civil Guard to rebel were not going to disappear just because the coup failed. Instead, they would require resolution to avoid a reoccurrence of February's mutiny and to shore up Spain's fragile democracy.

The dilemma faced by King Juan Carlos and his Prime Minister, however, was that even though Spain's military and security forces were a source of danger, they were also a necessity. Institutionally, these were powerful organizations that had resisted change and reform. Their cooperation and services were going to be required, however, if the government was to be successful in restoring law and order in Spain and in regaining the confidence of the people. In short, the government faced two fundamental choices. It could take a hard line toward the military and security forces and thoroughly reform both institutions, an act which would, in



all probability, alienate moderate officers who had remained loyal to the King but were still wary of a civilian government sticking its nose in their affairs. Or, it could appease the generals and acquiesce to their demands for more influence and control over Spain's internal affairs, especially with regard to civil order. In practice, the government's response was a mixture of the two with more weight given to appeasement than reform.

The handling of the coup conspirators is an excellent example of the government's dual approach to the problem. All told, thirty officers, including General Armada, Milan del Bosch and Colonel Tejero were arrested in connection with the coup. Charges against the two hundred members of the Guardia Civil who took part in the seizure of the Cortes, however, were dropped. Although the conspirators faced sentences of up to thirty years, prosecution of those involved has become a drawn out process. The actual courts martial are not to take place until early next year despite public demand for swift trials. [158] Meanwhile, the conspirators have become heroes to many in the military and among the Spanish political right who see them as true patriots motivated by their love of Spain and their loyalty to the monarchy. [159]

The need to maintain the Army's loyalty was reflected at this summer's Armed Forces Day parade in Barcelona. An event normally ignored by Spanish politicians and given scant



coverage by the press, the parade was transformed by the jumpy atmosphere that prevailed in Spain following the coup into a major political event. As reported in the New York Times, "Prime Minister Calvo Sotelo and virtually his entire cabinet, keen to display their solidarity with the military, moved for the weekend to Barcelona and dutifully attended various martial demonstrations, mock landings, and solemn pledges of allegiance to the Spanish flag." [161]

This is not to imply that the government ignored the necessity to reform the armed forces. Immediately after the coup, a number of military commands were revamped and loyal generals shifted into command of key military posts. [162] Furthermore, a new retirement law that had been under debate for nearly three years, was finally passed by the Cortes and signed into force by the King on July 23. This law lowered the ages for officers to move to the reserve list and authorized the Defense Minister to transfer officers even if they did not request such reassignment. [163]

The retirement law will not have much immediate impact on the military hierarchy, since full implementation of its provisions will take several years. However, it will gradually alleviate the military's top-heavy rank structure.

Another statute of significance, passed by the Cortes in the aftermath of the February coup, is a state of emergency law. This law, which governs the states of alert, emergency and siege, grants the government significant powers, such as



the suspension of constitutional liberties, in the event of future crises. Use of the law, however, must have the approval of the Cortes, and the civilian government, not the military, will assume all special powers laid down by the law, thereby ensuring that the civil sector retains authority whatever the situation. [164]

In an effort to redefine the Army's mission away from a strictly internal role, Calvo Sotelo has accelerated Spain's application to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Joining NATO has been part of the government's plan to integrate Spain into Western Europe. It is a divisive political issue in Spain, with the PCE and PSOE strongly opposed to Spanish membership. Behind the debate lie questions concerning Spain's place in Europe, its geographical role, relations with the United States and the status of Gibraltar. What is important here, however, are the implications of NATO membership for the Spanish military, particularly the Army.

NATO enthusiasts in Spain, principally in the UCD, have argued that membership will bring modernization of equipment, joint maneuvers, and other contracts with the professional armies of Western Europe that will give Spanish generals more positive preoccupations than "bemoaning Basque terrorism", or plotting the "salvation of the fatherland". [165] Socialist detractors, on the other hand, argue that NATO membership would not necessarily be an effective defense against a future army coup. They note that Portugal under Salazar and



Greece under the Colonels were NATO members and that NATO membership provided little deterrent to the generals in Turkey. [166]

The Spanish Navy is a highly professional force that could easily assume a mission in defense of NATO's southern flank, and the Air Force, though small, is modern and capable. The Spanish Army, on the other hand, deployed in a primarily internal security role, would make little contribution to the NATO mission. It is not surprising, therefore, that officers of the Spanish Air Force and Navy tend to favor NATO membership, while the Army has been less happy about that prospect, with less technically skilled junior officers and senior officers of the Franco mold particularly hostile to the idea. [167]

The hostility of some army officers to NATO membership for Spain centers around two basic concerns. In the first place, many senior officers indoctrinated under Franco believe that the Army's first priority is the preservation of the Spanish state. They are not thrilled at the prospect of taking the Army out of its internal security role. For these officers, it is easier to see a threat to Spain coming from within the country than from without. Secondly, the Army as a whole is worried that NATO membership would force a more realistic evaluation of Spanish defense priorities with a resultant increase in Navy and Air Force budgets and a corresponding decrease in the Army's, thus contributing to a



growing fear among many officers that the Army's centrality to the affairs of the nation is diminishing. [168]

Nonetheless, Calvo Sotelo has been successful in getting Spain's NATO application approved by parliament despite opposition from a faction of the military and by the Socialist and Communist parties who demand that the issue be decided by national referendum. During the first week of December, 1981, Spain formally submitted its application to the NATO council. NATO membership for Spain, is expected to be quickly approved by the organization's members. Whether this will, in fact, take the Army out of politics remains to be seen. As Meir Serfaty suggests, however, "it is unlikely that the power of the Army will be greatly diminished in a country where intervention is both traditionally and constitutionally possible (through Article eight) and where the Army, if not the police, still enjoys a great deal of prestige." [169]

The government's argument that NATO membership would define a new mission for the Army stands in sharp contrast to the government's new anti-terrorism offensive declared in March 1981. In response to a renewed wave of violence instigated by the ETA-M, which included the murder of two Army colonels, the government attempted to defuse tension among the nation's military by enlisting the armed forces in the fight against terrorism. In doing so, it supported the Army's domestic mission and reaffirmed the Army's traditional role



of guaranteeing the internal security of the nation. Nonetheless, military units were dispatched to the northern region to seal the border with France, behind which Spanish authorities claimed Basque terrorists took refuge after staging their attacks. Navy units patrolled the coast while Army commandos guarded the mountain passes of the Pyrenees.

The decision to incorporate the military in the Basque terrorist fight created a justifiable impression that the government had acquiesced in the principal demands of those right-wing officers responsible for the February coup attempt. Furthermore, the measure could very well play onto the ETA's hands by alienating the Basque population and by providing increased opportunity for ETA attacks against the military. Nonetheless, all major political parties in Spain condemned the ETA and supported the government's strong anti-terrorist stand, for it became painfully apparent during the aftermath of the February coup that the problem must be resolved if Spain's democratic viability was to be ensured. Even Carlos Garaicoetxea gave his cautious support to the measure after receiving government assurances that the Army would not be employed in the interior of the Basque country and would not fight the terrorists directly. [170]

In addition to incorporating the military into its anti-terrorism offensive, the Spanish government renewed pressure on France to assist in its fight against the ETA. The government hoped that French President Francois Mitterand's new



socialist government would track down and extradite ETA terrorists taking refuge in France. The previous government of Giscard d'Estaing had been uncooperative on this issue, fearing that a crackdown on the French side of the Pyrenees would alienate French Basques and provoke ETA violence on French soil. Despite pressures from Madrid, the French have yet to agree to an extradition arrangement with Spain, but have pledged to pursue crimes committed by Basque separatists on French soil. They have also assigned additional police forces to duty on the Spanish border. [171]

One aspect of the terrorist problem that the government has so far neglected to address is the continuing problems of the Guardia Civil. If there is one factor that still unites Basques, it is their common hatred of this paramilitary group who are still regarded as members of an occupying army.

The Guardia Civil once again embarrassed the government this summer as a result of the so called "Almería case". In short, three young men, mistakenly identified as ETA terrorists, were apparently tortured and then murdered by Guardia Civil members who then faked an automobile accident to cover up the incident. The credibility of Calvo Sotelo's government suffered a serious blow when the Interior Minister persisted with an official version of how the three men died which closely followed the Guardia Civil cover story. The incident rapidly assumed national proportions, given the Guardia



Civil's role in the February coup. The ability of the government to control its security forces was once more questioned. Eventually, the commander of the Guardia Civil garrison in Almeria and two other members of the force were arrested and charged with manslaughter. The damage was done, however, as people began to fear that the fight against terrorism was getting out of hand, with police methods threatening innocent citizens' lives. [172] As long as the government is reluctant to reform its internal security forces, incidents of this type will continue to give new life to ETA terrorism and short circuit any attempt to restore law and order in the Basque region.

In sum, the government of Calvo Sotelo has pursued a mixed program of reform and appeasement in its efforts to defuse the threat of a military coup in Spain. One could argue that the military got what it wanted in the wake of the February coup especially with regards to the terrorist problem. To eliminate the threat of a future coup, however, and to keep the military out of politics, a strong government with solid democratic institutions supporting is required. Conversely, the perception of a weak and divided government incapable of running the affairs of the nation will surely tempt the Spanish military to take matters into its own hands.



## VI. CONCLUSION: THE VIABILITY OF SPANISH DEMOCRACY

At the present time (December 1981), the viability of Spanish democracy remains uncertain as rumors of another coup attempt continued to circulate in Spain. [173] These rumors persist despite the fact that Basque terrorism - the Achilles' heel of Spanish democracy - is at a new low. From January to November of this year there have been "only" thirty-three deaths resulting from terrorism compared to one hundred and twenty for the same period last year, and since June, only five deaths have occurred, indicating that the government's fight against terrorism is finally showing results. [174]

Although numerous arrests and police roundups have largely dismantled the terrorist organizational structure, it is also apparent that a growing social rejection of the ETA, as a result of the approaching reality of Basque autonomy, has taken the wind out of separatism. Continued progress toward full implementation of the Basque autonomy statute is imperative, however, if stability in the region is to be guaranteed. Alarmed by February's coup, Basque nationalist leaders took a low profile and accepted a slowdown in the devolution process in order not to further provoke the military. They continue to cite, however, the need for the Basque government to become directly involved in sorting out the terrorist problem. Specifically, they



emphasize the need for an indigenous Basque police force to replace the hated Guardia Civil. Although the government has agreed to this demand, a complete changeover promises to be a drawn out process and will probably take up to five years to complete. [175]

Meanwhile, the ETA remains a source of danger to Spain's democracy even though its activity has been drastically curtailed. On October 2, 1981, for example, an ETA bomb blew a hole in the side of a Spanish destroyer docked in Santander harbor. Fortunately, no lives were lost although the bomb could have taken scores if it had touched off the ship's magazine. Heavy casualties aboard the destroyer would probably have been successful in provoking the military. [176]

A major concern of Spanish democrats has been the growth of the Spanish far-right in the aftermath of the February coup. As mentioned previously, Colonel Tejero and the other coup conspirators have become heroes to francoists and other right-wing sympathizers in Spain. It has been reported, for instance, that some conservative military officers have been raising funds for the families of those men under arrest. [177] Furthermore, on the sixth anniversary of Franco's death this past November, nearly three hundred thousand Spaniards, offering the fascist salute and shouting demands for Tejero's freedom, packed the square in front of the Royal Palace in Madrid at a rally led by Blas Pinar, the head of the ultra-right New Force Party. [178]



Emboldered by the coup attempt and what they perceive to be government acquiescence to the conspirators' demands, the far-right has kept alive talk of a military government in Spain. The far-right's rhetoric centers around the supposition that democracy is the fundamental cause of Spain's present problems and the expectation that the army will have to do something to save General Armada, General Milans del Bosch and Colonel Tejero, who are still awaiting their courts martial. [179] With the growth of a more vocal and assertive right, one can expect the conspirators' trials to raise the political temperature of the nation.

What is more likely to trigger a military coup at the present time than either Basque terrorism or far-right activism is the growing perception that the government has lost the capacity to govern. In recent months, it has become apparent that Spain's main political parties have forgotten the King's post-coup appeal for common sense and cooperation. In November, the King urged politicians to mend their ways. "In order to retain public respect", he warned, "politics must not degenerate into inefficiency, bureaucratic immobility and feuding" - which is a fair description of the Spanish political scene during the past six months. [180]

One might question, for example, the wisdom of dividing the country at this time over the NATO issue. NATO membership, which would probably appear irrelevant to most Spaniards, who believe their country faces more pressing social and



economic problems, has, nonetheless, been politicized by the socialist left into a major issue used to mobilize the populace against the Calvo Sotelo government. [181]

Furthermore, the UCD has been plagued by an eroding public image, political infighting and internal divisions which have raised serious doubts about the present government's survivability. With the exception of its anti-terrorist campaign, the Calvo Sotelo government has not appeared aggressive in tackling Spain's problems. It has been lax in dealing with Spain's troubled economy and has had difficulty in devising a comprehensive economic program to deal with inflation, unemployment, and the problems associated with Spain's uneven economic development. The economic condition of the Basque country is an important variable in the stability equation that the government is trying to formulate for that region. Basque industries, especially steel and shipbuilding, are in serious trouble, and Basque unemployment, at twenty percent, is well above the national average of twelve to fourteen percent. [182] It is essential, therefore, that Prime Minister Calvo Sotelo follow up on his promise of new investment in the Basque economy if a measure of stability is to be achieved in the region. .

In addition, scandal has continued to rock the government. Adulterated cooking oil, reported to have killed 120 people and to have harmed 11,000 others this past summer and infected pork sold in northeastern Spain caused a public outcry



which brought charges of corruption and cover up against the government along with calls for the Health Minister's dismissal. [183]

The government was further shaken in September by the resignation of Justice Minister Francisco Ordóñez, who was unhappy with the government's shift to the right. In November, Ordóñez along with sixteen other parliamentarians of the social democrat wing of the party left the UCD to establish their own Democratic Action Party. [184]

By the end of November the UCD was in serious danger of breaking up. While Suárez firmly believed that the UCD should remain in the center of Spain's political spectrum, Prime Minister Calvo Sotelo has favored a more homogeneous, conservative position for the party and the government. This led to left-right cleavages within the party which resulted in Ordóñez' defection and the defection of four right-wing deputies who disagreed with the government over its policies of devolution and divorce.

One politician who has gained from this governmental crisis is Manuel Fraga, leader of the right-wing Popular Alliance (AP) which was the surprise winner in the Galicia regional election this Fall. Fraga's formula for a stable Spain is a "grand right" based on his own small but growing party and the right wing of the UCD. It is argued by the Right, that a "natural alliance" of this kind would please the military and reconcile doubting officers to democracy. [185]



In sum, the greatest immediate danger to Spanish democracy is posed by the instability of the present government. A collapse of the UCD government would mean an early election which would probably favor Felipe Gonzalez and the PSOE, although Fraga's AP could be expected to make significant gains. The question is whether the Spanish military would tolerate an election in which a socialist outcome is a distinct possibility. Would such an election prompt the military to stage another coup to pre-empt possible socialist gains?

King Juan Carlos remains the strongest political figure in Spain and is the cornerstone upon which Spanish democracy presently rests. For the present, he still retains the military's loyalty and thus has the power and the influence to keep the generals in their place. The King apparently recognizes the dangers ahead and has pressured his Prime Minister to get his government in order. In response, Calvo Sotelo recently ousted Rodriguez Sahagan, a close friend of Suarez, from the presidency of the UCD and took the job himself. Calvo Sotelo is now putting together a new ministerial team which is expected to be to the right-of-center one willing to seek an understanding with Fraga's Popular Alliance if it becomes necessary to keep his government in power. [186]

The Spanish military has emerged from the February coup with its influence intact if not enhanced. The interests of the military weigh heavily on the minds of civilian



politicians whose efforts to keep the generals pacified have given them a "silent" veto in many areas of national policy. As one socialist legislator remarked following the February coup attempt. "We now have three chambers in the Cortes: the Congress, the Senate, and the Joint Chiefs of the General Staff". [187]

The integration of Spain into Western Europe is predicated upon the continued success of its democratic evolution. A return to a rightist, military dictatorship would be detrimental to this goal and would therefore not serve the American interest as fully as a democracy even if American base facilities were retained. The ideological versus security motivations in U.S. foreign policy toward Spain will, one hopes, be resolved by the construction of a strong Spanish democracy fully cooperative in guaranteeing general western security interests.

The ultimate guarantee of Spanish democracy depends upon the strength of its democratic institutions. Spain has undergone a remarkable and dramatic change during the past six years, but it will take time for these institutions to take root in Spanish society. Until then, however, Spain's democracy remains susceptible to forces rooted in its authoritarian past.



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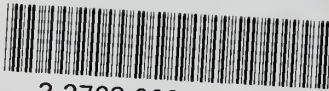






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